

JOE MERABELLE  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
Tape No. I-15

An Interview By  
Phil Notarianni  
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American West Center  
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Joe Merabelle

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THE FOLLOWING IS AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED WITH MR. JOE MERABELLE ON JANUARY 20, 1972 AT SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH. THE INTERVIEWER IS PHIL NOTARIANNI.

PN: This interview is basically concerned with the discussion of the Italian lodges and societies which existed in the state of Utah. Specifically the Societa Cristoforo Colombo of Salt Lake City, Utah. Joe when did you first join the Christopher Columbus Lodge? In which year?

JM: 1916.

PN: You had already been to Texas and you came back and joined the lodge.

JM: That's right.

PN: Who was president of the lodge at that time?

JM: I think Joe Ruga.

PN: Joe Ruga. Do you remember any of the other officers?

JM: No. He was president.

PN: And that is all that you remember.

JM: I just join, but I don't want very much losing time over the lodge, the first year, two or three.

PN: Why did you join the lodge to begin with?

JM: Well, I had a lot of friends in there and they wanted me to join.

PN: Why was it such a good idea to join the lodge?

JM: Well, them day you had a free doctor service and if you was sick you get a dollar a day. If you was in the hospital you get another 50 cents extra.

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PN: Do you remember who the doctor was that they...

JM: I think that it was Dr. Spreg.

PN: Dr. Spreg. What other activities did the lodge do at first when you joined it rather?

JM: Oh, once in a while they would give a dance and the birthday party--for instance, during the summer once or twice. And they use to participate to the 24th parade.

PN: Did they participate in that parade in 1916 when you first joined?

JM: Not that I remember.

PN: How long after that year did they?

JM: Around '24, 1924.

PN: I see it was in the twenties.

JM: Yeah. The big celebration was on the 12th of October. They used to rent the Salt Palace on 9th South. They was getting the biggest dance hall in town in order to accommodate all the colony like for instance that come from Tooele, Magna (it used to be Garfield). All the valley. The whole Salt Lake County and the by that festivity there use to be 700 or 800 people attended the dance.

PN: Mostly Italians?

JM: All Italians.

PN: Seven or eight hundred Italians attended?

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JM: Well, Italian-Americans.

PN: Right.

JM: Or more, and then we had another big place to have this activity. Up at the auditorium on Richard St. which had another big dance hall. The other was the one we sold around 750 tickets.

PN: When was this big response for Columbus Day first noticed? Was it in the 20's when you had these big celebrations? Now the first legal holiday for Christopher Columbus Day was in 1919. So it was during the 20's that you had these big celebrations.

JM: Yeah, we use to celebrate the 20th of September too. Not every year, but...

PN: What significance is that particular date?

JM: Well, that is what you call Independence of Italy. That is when Italy became unified, the 20th of September, and that is why we celebrate it.

PN: How many years did you celebrate this particular...

JM: Oh, not very many times.

PN: Why did you stop, do you know?

JM: I don't know. There was too many things that people, they don't want to be bothered with it.

PN: Do you remember that first celebration of Christopher Columbus Day in 1919? They had a big parade here in SA Lake. Do you remember that?

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JM: I remember it, but I don't remember the year that it was. That must have been a couple of years later because they had it a few times. I don't know how many times they did have it, but...

PN: It was the first big parade here in Salt Lake for Columbus Day. In that particular parade there was another society that was involved and they were called the Sons of Italy. Do you remember that lodge?

JM: Well, I was a member of that too. I belong to both lodge.

PN: What particular function did the Sons of Italy have that the Christopher Columbus Lodge didn't have?

JM: Well it is not the way, the reason there was another lodge on account of...Mr. Anselmo organized the Figli d'Italy, son of Italy you might say.

PN: Figli d'Italia.

JM: Figli d'Italia, yeah. And that is who made the parade for Christopher Columbus, not the Christopher Lodge. CAuse Anselmo, he was the reason it past through legislation, and then he belong to the Sons of Italy and not the Christopher Columbus Lodge.

PN: Did he ever belong to the Christopher Columbus Lodge?

JM: Oh yeah, that is he first come; he belong to the Christopher Columbus.

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PN: Why did he finally break off and establish another lodge?

JM: Well, they just expel him in other words they voted him out.

PN: Could you tell me the reason?

JM: No, I don't know. I was down in Texas then.

PN: Oh, so he was voted out around, what 1914, 1915?

JM: Yeah, somewhere around there. I don't know why.

PN: What activities did the Sons of Italy have? Were they basically similar to the Christopher Columbus Lodge?

JM: Yeah, same thing.

PN: Did they offer sick benefits and medical benefits and things of that sort?

JM: Same thing.

PN: When did that particular lodge die out?

JM: Well, I wasn't a treasurer of the Son of Italy a long time. We have to have a meeting once a month and it was cost money. The membership was getting smaller, and cause what happen to the Sons of Italy when World War I started. What ever little fund that they had on the bank for protection there what you call the membership. Few members from the lodge, they vote then to the Red Cross. At that time it was around, I don't know what year now, but anyway. As the

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treasurer of the Son of Italy why I suggest on both lodge to cut the expense. The vote was to clean it out as far as the membership goes. No, I suggest to the Figli d' Italia incorporate with Christopher Columbus.

PN: Why was the membership thinning out in those years?

JM: Well on account of immigration. See, after the war the restriction on immigration.

PN: So you weren't getting in lots of people.

JM: We don't get the people who that would care for that particular lodge. That is why they been thinning out ever since. The younger generation, they have other activity which in them days they never had it. If they want any good time, they was join a lodge. But now they can create their own good time and as far as lodge go it don't matter.

PN: Now this lodge, Sons of Italy in that publication that came out in 1930 that Sopito Valentini did. He mentioned he had the Figli d' Italia listed as part of the lodge called the Giuseppe Mazzini. Could you clarify that for me?

JM: I don't know.

PN: It was just the Sons of Italy.

JM: It was just the Sons of Italy and the Columbus through the national Sons of Italy. California got



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it now. All over California...

PN: What is this national organization?

JM: Well it was just like any other lodge. They got a branch all over like the Elks, or Moose, or anybody else. That don't mean that they got to have particular by-law, it is just like any other lodge.

PN: A national aspect.

JM: In the same principle, yes.

PN: Was the Christopher Columbus Society affiliated with the national organization?

JM: It use to.

PN: And what was the national organization called?

JM: It was Christopher Columbus.

PN: Oh, that was the name of the national organization.

JM: Yeah, that only reason that they was organized together and connected together in activity, that if any thing wrong in one city in them day most all the members belong, work in the mine. Like in Bingham or Carbon County or ny other place: Pennsylvania, the coal mines for instance. You know all these places they got branches. Christopher Columbus Lodge. See the reason they belong to the national on account of anything go wrong with the member that got killed in the mine or some kind of accident and the lodge was prepared to collect whatever help they can give him.

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PN: From the other member?

JM: From the other members. That was the only reason that it was organized.

PN: Did you for instance, did the local branch of the Christopher Columbus Lodge have to pay a certain amount each year to the national group?

JM: Yeah, percentage. I don't know, I don't remember how much.

PN: According to how many members you have?

JM: Well, so much each member.

PN: You can't remember the price on that?

JM: No, but the reason pull out from the Christopher Columbus National, once a year they have a delegate to the national convention, and we sent some delegate from here which up to Kamas City. That is where the national convention. When our delegate go over there and find that out that the national treasure was way smaller than ours here. And then when he come back to report that it was time to pull out.

PN: You mean the national treasure for that organization was less than what you had accumulated here?

JM: And then, when they report such an existence to the national organization, we pull out and don't belong any more.

PN: Can you recall what was the high point for your

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membership here in the Salt Lake lodge?

JM: Oh, I don't know, I don't remember that, but one day I hear a talk it was about over 250.

PN: Over 250 people. Now was this exclusively for men?

JM: Yeah for men only.

PN: But they could bring their wives to the functions, to the dinner, whatever.

JM: Yeah, that was a difference, yeah.

PN: But the women didn't come to the meetings?

JM: Oh no.

PN: Can you remember what some of the other branches of the Christopher Columbus Lodge were here in the state? Did they have one down in Carbon County?

JM: I don't know, I think...

PN: They had one at Castle Gate didn't they?

JM: They had one in Bingham that is all I know.

PN: Did they have one in Ogden?

JM: I don't know that.

PN: You don't know about any of the others?

JM: It's not been knowing for being very much social. Not that I know. You know we try to organize Ogden Italian American Civic League. We just waste a lot of time over there, but no result.

PN: So, the Italians in Salt Lake didn't mingle much with the Italians in Ogden socially, with the lodge.

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JM: The ones from Ogden don't mingle.

PN: Oh, I see.

JM: Not that, cause they ain't got nothing to mingle there for, with. You know what I mean and yet there used to be a lot of Italians.

PN: Did you ever have a social activity with any of the lodges in Carbon County?

JM: No.

PN: Do you know anything about those lodges in Carbon County? For instance they had a Christopher Columbus Lodge in Castle Gate that I know of.

JM: No, in them days they don't. They don't...or unite together to celebrate. See, the facilities they don't have them like now when the automobile can go back and forth and join one or the other. In them days you have to take a train normally and they don't go to that much trouble to do it. Then the expense was if you come to Salt Lake, you got to stay overnight in the early day in order to go back the next day. So each one was on their own, a party, a celebration and everything else.

PN: Did you, what other holidays did you celebrate besides the 24th of July and possibly the 4th of July that were of a national significance here in the United States?

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JM: That is all.

PN: That's all. Did you celebrate Declaration Day?

JM: No. No, it was just, the only thing they celebrate was birthday party.

PN: Oh, the lodge birthday.

JM: Among themselves, yes.

PN: Oh, each individual's birthday?

JM: Yeah, what I mean, yeah.

PN: When was this lodge first established, the Christopher Columbus Lodge here in Salt Lake? You gave me a date last week was that...

JM: 1897.

PN: 1897.

JM: 17th, 28th of April.

PN: 28th of April, 1897.

JM: Yeah.

PN: And it was organized here in Salt Lake?

JM: Oh yeah.

PN: Do you think that your membership in this lodge helped you to become a little bit closer to not only the Italian people that you associated with, but let's say the native Utahans her in the state?

JM: I don't know what you mean by saying that. Them day they don't mingle with one another, between the lodge and the community.

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PN: You didn't mingle?

JM: No. And now that they are a little more civilized they got enough members to do it. Now suppose they have 150-200 members, to make a big celebration you can mingle a little bit more. But not 40 or 50 years ago.

PN: How come?

JM: Well how come, because that's all you know. You don't think that people got smart in Salt Lake overnight. Even the Americans. It take so much time to harmonize what the people, the different class of people to understand that they all be the same, instead of superiority to one another. But them days, why if you was on the West side, that's where you going to stay.

PN: Did the lodge try to mingle?

JM: Well, the lodge, it's the members. It's the members don't live only in one district. If you live on the West side, how can you going to mingle on the East.

PN: So there was a barrier there.

JM: Not a barrier, but it just that they don't know each other. Now, all of these people think they are more smart than ever. The older ones. But it's a time to correct this mistake among the people, among the nation. NOW you talk to kids they know more than

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what I use to know 20 years ago, 40 years ago which is true. But still by the time he come my age he know more and more understanding one another. Don't think that now they up to date. They still got to go a long way to go.

PN: Yeah, that is true. You mentioned the fact that the lodge participated in the 24th of July parade, why did they participate in the parade? It was a state holiday.

JM: Well, that's a civic duty. That show good will that they want to be proud of living in this community. And the only way that you can prove it to associate and display the Pioneer feeling which the lodge is a pioneer anyway.

PN: That is true. Did this participation in the 24th of July parade help you and the other Italians?

JM: Nobody expects any help from this thing.

PN: So you just did it as part of a civic duty?

JM: It is not thing like what I give you, you got to give me back.

PN: I see.

JM: You now that kind of idea never fit. What they do it's participate with the float is to honor the pioneer. The pioneer of 1897 when we organized the lodge that is why, that is who we honor ourselves,

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and you can't honor them people unless you prove it.

PN: Oh, I see it is clear now.

JM: You got that in your head now. You don't have to expect any consideration from the authority that you belong. If you belong, you belong to honor your own and not anybody else, united with the other. Now it's a lot of things to be done here, but the way that it looks like now, the new people are going the wrong way instead of the right way. By the time you straighten up your house the house is going to be wrecked again. That is the way it shows now in general principle.

PN: So the Sons of Italy Lodge then was incorporated in the Christopher Columbus Lodge in about the middle 1920's?

JM: No, no the thirties.

PN: In the thirties.

JM: Between the thirties or the forties, somewhere around here.

PN: Were there any other lodges?

JM: I don't know. Let's see. No I don't remember.

PN: Was Anselmo still a member of that lodge in the thirties?

JM: No.

PN: The Sons of Italy.



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JM: No, he left a few years after he organized the Figli d'Italia, he was out of there too.

PN: Was he forced out or did he just quit?

JM: No, he just drop out. If you don't pay the dues, you drop out.

PN: Were you able to help a lot of the Italian people with their doctor bills and this sort of thing with the lodges?

JM: Not now.

PN: I mean when the lodge was going really strong.

JM: Not the doctor bill.

PN: Well, the insurance or whatever you...

JM: No, the member got a dollar a day like I told you when they are sick. If he was in the hospital he got 50 cents extra, and the doctor was free. And the family got to pay half the doctor bill. That is all.

PN: Half.

JM: Then there use to be benefits, a dollar a member in good standing in case of death. Now suppose the lodge was 100 people in good standing and one of the members passed away. Well, the family get \$100. A dollar each from each member. if there was 150 he gets \$150, if there was 75 he gets \$75.

PN: Did the lodge members attend the funeral or anything of that sort?

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JM: Oh yeah. It was compulsory in them days but not any more because there's no members now.

PN: When the lodge was going strong.. you remember the book that you gave me Saturday with the rituals. Did you follow that very closely, that book?

JM: Oh yes, every bit of it.

PN: So you had a well organized meeting?

JM: Oh yes, that is why the book was printed for. Now we don't have that regiment cause there is no members.

PN: How many members do you have there, Joe, about 13?

JM: 14.

PN: 14. Oh, something else that just entered my mind. Are you familiar with the Columbian Federation of Italian Societies? Do you know what that is?

JM: It is the same thing.

PN: Yeah, I can draw the connection, but I was just wondering if you knew that particular federation?

JM: That is what the Columbus Federation. That is the same thing. It used to be like national.

PN: So you mean the Christopher Columbus Lodge was a part of this Columbian Federation? That is what you're talking about when you talk about the national organization.

JM: Yes that is it. That is the same thing.

PN: Well, did you know that the Stella d'America Lodge in

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Helper was also a part of this Columbian Federation?

JM: Well, don't know. But you can, you don't have to have the same name.

PN: Oh I see, you don't have to have the same name, but as long as you are part of that Columbian...

JM: National, yeah.

PN: Oh I see, in other words there was just one national organization.

JM: Well, the Sons of Italy got their own.

PN: So there was maybe two. Oh that is interesting.

JM: The Sons of Italy got and they, you talk like Mazzini that is the individual each town, like the Ogdens have a Lodge and call it the Mazzini Lodge. Mazzini that's a big name.

PN: Yeah, Giuseppe Mazzini. So it first depended on just what particular local you wanted to put it.

JM: In Rock Springs, Wyoming they wanted to put the Marconi Lodge. They got a lot of Marconi Lodge. It is the name of the town where they organize, and then they can join the Sons of Italy or Columbus...

PN: Joe, in your opinion then, do you think that the lodge was successful in what it attempted to do when it was as its high point and had enough members?

JM: Oh yeah, they had a good time and a lot of them got benefits and got a lot of respect.

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PN: They got a lot of respect from...

JM: Everybody.

PN: From their fellow Italians?

JM: I didn't asked to be Italian to be respected.

PN: Well what I mean is...

JM: If you expect to be respected by your own people, then you don't mean nothing.

PN: But they were respected by others.

JM: In generally.

PN: What did the lodge do to foster this respect?

JM: Mind their own business.

PN: (laughter)...I see.

JM: If you want to be respected, don't get in on the politics. When you get in on politics, you lose all the respect you have. If you believe it or not, that is the way it works. You see when you are in political life, somebody don't like you and somebody like you. So you lose the respect from one gang and get it from another one. But if you are neutral and do your own business and respect all of them then all the rest respect you the same. All the political job is a two-way road. I don't think that one means just what they say either. If you can make a living on your own and the go politician, then you get it.

PN: At the beginning of the twenties when you had this

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restriction immigration restriction beginning, did the Italian community here in Salt Lake have any trouble from any of the outsiders?

JM: No, never.

PN: And you think that..that is because they generally didn't bother anybody and minded their own business.

JM: Cooperate and help the community the best way they know how.

PN: Was the lodge ever involved in any other civic activities other than that parade that you mentioned?

JM: No. No, now there is too many civic things. In them days don't was very many. Now take it for granted that everyday they are "munching" for something. Either children or arthritis or one another. In them days such things never was exist. They do more emotion...now every day now different organization than them days.

PN: Did you belong to any other organization other than the Christopher Columbus Lodge? For instance, did you belong to the Elks?

JM: No.

PN: You belong to the Moose?

JM: The Moose, and the Elk, I mean the Eagle. And then when depression time come, I just cut them off. I couldn't pay all the dues.

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PN: When did you join the Moose Lodge? Was that in the twenties?

JM: The 24th or the 25 or something.

PN: So in other words you belonged not only to the Italian organizations, but you belonged also to the other organizations.

JM: Oh yeah.

JM: What custom is for you is for your home, the lodge has nothing to do with it.

PN: What I mean is for instance, did you use Italian language all the time?

JM: Well, because what else you can use. The other people don't know speak any other language. Now we don't use the Italian language any more because nobody talk Italian. But in them days how you can talk English when you don't know what you are talking about.

PN: Then you said that you celebrated the 20th of September, to begin with.

JM: Well that's a national affair. That has nothing to do with just to memorize when Italy was united. The lodge know what to day was the Independence Day. But you can communicate to the public in order that the public knows about it you got to celebrate that day. You got the idea.

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PN: Right, sure.

JM: Well, that's what mean to. Now it is not when do you celebrate your own national holiday; it's not for you because you already know it. It is to other to remember.

PN: I see. One final question, Joe. Within your organization did you ever have any harsh feelings among the people that were from one part of Italy and people who were from another?

JM: No, not in our lodge.

PN: Not in your lodge. So everything was pretty harmonious.

JM: Yeah, we know better. No use to have a lodge if you keep the east and the west and the north and the south.

PN: That is a good idea. That is a good point, Joe.

JM: What?

PN: Were there a lot of Italian people that did the same thing?

JM: Sure. Sure they did.

PN: So in that way you would get involved with the other individuals. That is very good Joe. Well, I guess that will conclude all I have. Thank you very much.

JM: You don't have to be worry who you are as long as you play fair with everybody. This idea that I am not

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American and I am not Italian or Mexican, or Nigger, that is nonsense. You do what you can for the other and the other do what he can for you. It never miss.

PN: Well, another question that I have about your lodge meeting, and your lodge activities, did you attempt to keep a few of your customs in this organization? For instance, you always would speak in Italian and write your notes in Italian. Are there any other customs that you did to maintain your Italian identity?

JM: No. I can't get you. I can't get what you mean?

PN: In other words, in your lodge activities did you try to keep some of your customs that you had from Italy? For instance, you said that you celebrated the 20th of September. Were there any others?

JM: Well, the lodge had nothing to do with what you keep, that comes through your home style.

PN: I see.

JM: Now what you custom you have in Italy, you don't have it for the lodge, you have it for your own home. That is what you got to look out to. You keep the custom in your home not to try and bring it to the lodge. That is silly to have a custom from one country on the lodge and do the same thing for another country.



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PN: What I basically...

PN: That is a good point.

JM: What the use of having a lodge.

PN: That is true, that is true. Well, thank you again  
Joe, very much.

JM: Okay.

HAROLD NIELSEN

Sandy, Utah

Tape No. I-25

An Interview By

Vincent Mayer and Phil Notarianni

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NIELSEN

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THE FOLLOWING IS AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. HAROLD NIELSEN, CONDUCTED BY VINCENT MAYER AND PHIL NOTARIANNI AT SANDY, UTAH, ON JULY 20, 1972.

PN: To begin with Mr. Nielsen, when did you arrive in Bingham?

HN: I first arrived in Bingham in October of 1919.

PN: And how old were you then, sir?

HN: I was ten.

PN: You were ten years old. Could you convey to me some of your experiences there, as a small boy, dealing with the foreign population there, Greeks, Italians?

HN: Well, I don't know whether I can remember as much as that. I came from a farming, Mormon town in Utah county. I got into Bingham the first year I was there I had eleven fights. They were all much different than I was. Of course, I fought enough where I was, but at that time the difference in nationalities wasn't as great, because I was in the fifth grade and most of the people that lived in the main part of Bingham were, that is, there wasn't much of a foreign element evident as there was later. I remember my first impression of Frog Town, which was the lower part of Bingham, was of a guy named Dominic Tapero, he was a fighter. He was a good fighter. Of course he was my idol. There were the Irish down there, the Kallitons, and they had a boy by the name of Mickey who was also a good fighter. He was the only kid that whipped me at first. But outside of Bingham in Hyland Boy and in Copperfield where most of the, you might say, people who had migrated into Utah and Salt Lake at the later date lived. There were Italians and many middle Europe, Yugoslavians, Greeks,

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Georgians, Armenians, almost anything that you can name.

VM: You had quite a melting pot there.

HN: Well, as I go over the year book, at that time, which was the year that I left there in about 1924, I don't find very many foreign names. And yet my, one of the few was Vietti and Alias. Hoots Alias we called him, Paul, quite a basketball player. Renald Vietti, another by the name of George Scusel was president of our sophomore class which was four or five years later. Andrew Contratto, the Vietti fellow had a brother named John who was going to school at that time, who later became a doctor. Joe Brisk, one of the few Jews that was able to make it in Bingham.

PN: How many Jewish families were there?

HN: Well, the Brisk family had Chestler and Mrs. Chestler was a Brisk. So actually, there were only two families. Chestler, Theodore Chestler, was the operator of a show and had been all of the time from there, and he married a Brisk woman and of course, her brothers were in town. She had three brothers and they ran the show business up there. And these were the only Jews, Jewish people, that were able to make it in Bingham, not because of the Italians or the Mexicans, but because of the Greeks. From the bottom of Bingham to the top of Copperfield we had Greeks all over. And the Greeks, at that time, had a camp up in Copperfield which was the farthest south of one branch of the canyon, what they called Greek Camp. And these people lived right up on the hills. They had goats and sheep. They worked out at Kennecott mostly as laborers, power monkeys and things like that. Now the Italians did

about the same thing. As I remember the Italians, I gathered down a few names and we had names like Dispenze, he was one of the later comings, Joe Dispenze, he was on the city council. He's a labor representative on the Kennecott, now he does all their bargaining. But the Contrattos, the Tagliattos, the Viettis, Schels, Muranos, Binachis, there were the people I knew when they moved up there. Now when I got older, of course, I became a little more aware of people being different. Two of the first Mexican people I ever met were a couple of twins. Now I can't remember their last names, but they were three or four years older than I was. They were very popular because they could organize games and play with the kids. Now the Tagliettis were the real tough family. Little John Taglietti, well he was always in trouble. Some of these kids were this way, most of them weren't. But as I go back and you mention Nicoletti, Conti, these people I met when I went back a second time. But the first time, the names I've mentioned, Delanore and Brentell, Tomy, Tebola, Avatella, Itasella. The Iasella was called Bushelshack Joe and he didn't speak English very well at all. His daughter taught for me in Lark in 1937. But Bushelshack Joe had a shack on the hill on the side of the road that went to Copperfield. He blew the whistle that said where the next explosion would be that would spring the hole to clean out a big hold down in the mountain where they could put a very heavy load of powder to break the bank in. Bushelshack Joe they called him. He had one arm and he raised quite a family.

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But he was a real old timer Italian. He hadn't learned the language, but he knew one thing: That you never spent more than you make, you always keep more. AND he came out of there a rich man. Which was in Copperfield.

VM: Now you left Bingham in '24 did you say?

HN: I left Bingham in '24 to come down here. My dad was the principal of the high school down here.

VM: Phil was telling me about that time, they had a little anti-foreign activity around the valley, and I was wondering about that in the form of the Ku Klux Klan in various points throughout the valley, I was wondering if you remember.

HN: Down here on this slag dump. At 90th South. Probably where you came off the freeway. Did you come off on 90th?

PN: No, we came off on State but we know where you're talking about.

HN: Well, right on the south side of the road and on the south side of 90th South and on the west side of State Street I could remember that on this big slag dump up there the old smelter they had a Ku Klux Klan. I didn't know why at the time because I was only about fourteen. But they had a cross up there and they burned it. But you felt that this was what?

VM: I was just wondering about that.

HN: You didn't have, you didn't know the background.

VM: No. Well, not too much of it, I was just trying to see.

HN: I don't know the reason for it. I always associated the Ku Klux Klan with Negro activity in them days. At that time I don't imagine we had very many Negroes around here unless they worked for

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the railroad.

PN: Most of the activity in this area, we found that the railroad areas and the mining areas and most of it was directed against almost any foreign group, Catholics as well as the Greeks, Italians, Slavic people. This is why I thought maybe there might have been a lot of activity in this area.

HN: Well, at that time, you see, I would have been only fifteen and had many other interests. But I had no feeling at all about any group because, as I say, the first eight or ten fifteen names here were people I associated with and knew quite well in Bingham, much better the second time than the first time. WE had a place named Hyland Boy, the Hyland Boy there were quite a few Italians in Hyland Boy because it was a place where they could make their own wine, and it was a place that was mountainous, really mountainous and most of the people came from Italy, came from the northern part and there were not so many from down around the boot or the toe and they carried on much of the same kind of like, outside of raising grapes, as they did in Italy. The same kinds of foods, the same kinds of wine.

VM: What kinds of activities did they have there? Can you recall social activities? Did they get together and have this dance they called Tarentella and things of that sort?

HN: These kinds of things I didn't see, no. I never did see. But their foods, their gnocchi, and their pastas and stuff like that were the things that I recall.

PN: Of course most of the high festivity was done by the Southern Ital-



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ians, but I was just wondering because at times I know there were a few up there at the time.

HN: Well, they had to be bitten by a spider down there to do the dance, didn't they? The tarantula. The Tarantella. But the Italians I knew were, the one I knew the best was my custodian Muretti and he was a very fine person. He worked most of his life in the mine and he got practically burned out of Hyland Boy. He had a cellar behind his house at the end of the mountain where he made wine. I guess he made fifteen or sixteen barrels of his wine. He made the best wine that I ever tasted, actually. And, of course, maybe because it was free that I liked it so well.

PN: Did they have lots of difficulties with federal officers there in the '20's with that?

HN: No. Although we, while he was custodian or janitor of my school he was arrested twice and his liquor license taken away, because he did sell this wine 25 cents for a glass this big, and fourty cents for one this big. He sold it all the time. He sold it to anybody, police officers and everybody. But from Salt Lake would come the liquor commission and if they needed some wine, some good wine, they would knock him over. They would fine one way or another to do it. Now this woman, you might say that the Greeks in Bingham ran the stores, the grocery stores. All up and down the streets. All the way through Copperfield and Bingham. They formed partnerships, there would be two Greek people. And they would form a corporation, first a corporation, and then they would form partnerships and this is one of the reasons why the Jewish

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people never got a foothold there.

PN: Were there a lot of Jewish families that tried to get a foothold there or were there just the two?

HN: Well, I know two that came into run clothing stores and couldn't make it and had to leave and that's not very many but...

PN: Could you remember who they were?

HN: Not right now I can't. The last one that left, the story was that he and the hiring man for the Utah Copper had a little program going where if you wanted a job you could go down to the Jewish store and buy a suit and then you could get a job down in Kennecott. And that worked. But they finally caught up with these and they fired him and the Jewish fellow left town.

PN: They had a similar experience at Magna, too.

HN: And this was during the time I just, after I graduated from high school and I couldn't get a job up there and they say that's the way to get a job. And it was tough to get jobs. I never did work for Kennecott but I know that this white fellow was fired just a year or two later and this was given as the reason. Bart Macky was his name.

PN: What did your father do?

HN: He was the principal of the high school.

PN: Can you remember any of his reactions to any of these groups of different nationalities?

HN: He was, I think he was quite popular with them. I know he taught Americanism classes. Americanization classes for all of the people up there who wanted to come, and it was free of charge. And I

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remember particular about the last group of classes that he had was a Greek fellow; and this Greek fellow was so pleased, was so tickled of how he was able to learn that, well, he was an insurance salesman and he came up to see my dad up at the top of Markham; we lived right under a bridge that carried the ore out toward Magna. And, of course, dad didn't want to but the insurance, but as he left, he said how much he appreciated what had happened and he started down outside the step and my mother fell down the up-step of the upstairs and broke her leg and he came back and wrote up an accident insurance policy and gave it to my dad. But my dad like this kind of group and he got along quite well with them. It was a rough time. My dad was there when a principal had imported a basketball player from back in the middle west because then you could play basketball almost indefinitely and this fellow was 21 or better. Finally he had some trouble between one of the players he had and his wife and himself, and he shot the player during the summer as he came out of the post office at the Bingham, what they called the PCO vault. They had to have a principal and they made my dad principal for a couple of years.

VM: What were some of the wild times?

HN: We had a fellow I don't know if you've heard this story, I think his name was Lopez.

VM: That old story of Lopez.

HN: Well, that was about 1913 or 14 in this time, but when I went there in 1919 they were still talking about it and the kids had

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PN: What was the version of it at the time?

HN: Well, I've heard several, the best one was he had trouble with the fellow that he shot over gambling debts and this, and he also claimed that this fellow had spoiled the name of his sister or had done something in this way with his sister relationship, and the quarrel grew to the point where he shot him. Now the story was then, when I went up there, that the guys would throw dollars in the air and Lopez would shoot them out of the air. Well, anyway, they tried to arrest him, as I learned the story, and he made his way over toward Utah Lake and they went down, one of my boyfriends, one of the friends I had in the sixth grade at that time was named Grant and his daddy had been killed by Lopez so they surrounded him down there, but he killed two or three, I think, and then when he made his way back up into Hyland Boy in the apex and supposedly went in the mine they never found him but they claimed he must have been in there because they went in looking for him and a man got shot in there. My version always was that they shot at each other. But he's never been found and there's never been any trace of him, and that was a real story among the kids.

VM: How was the other people's view, the story, was he a folk hero or a name of condemnation?

HN: Yes, he was a folk hero. They did feel bad about the guy, Grant that shot him, he was the deputy sherriff and he was well liked. But they had the idea up there the law officers are like law breakers when they take the job they take the chance. And their

idea is that the law officer has to be as careful maybe as the lawbreaker is not to kill anybody because you're protecting yourself whether you did wrong or not, you're protecting yourself. And the law, I felt, in Bingham never had the same substance, the same authority, the same respect there as it had here. It was more your behavior. Bingham was a good town. We never locked our doors. I never know a girl in all of the times that I was there that was molested at any time, never. There were a lot of fine people there, there were a lot of bachelors there. But they made provisions for this. And Doc Stropp at the hospital would go around when I went now, here is another story that kids nine, ten, twelve talk about houses of prostitution. We had kids that lived next door to them. We had kids who could climb out their window onto their roof and watch. And they talked about it. And we had girls in the school and kids in the school who came, Italian people owned hotels in which there were supposed to be prostitutes and this was a common thing and this in Bingham was something that should be there because it did protect our people and whatever contracts were made were between two people. There were no sexual attempts, no molestations or anything against our people. That's one of the things I liked about that town is its attitude, toward authority and law and living.

VM: Now, you left Bingham in say '29?

HN: No, we first left Bingham in '24.

VM: In '24 did you go to...?

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HN: We came right to Sandy here. My dad came down here to be principal.

VM: And you returned when...to begin teaching?

HN: Well, I returned in '37, as close as I could get to Lark and that's when I ran across...the goatman who made cheese up in Butterfield Canyon.

PN: Nicoletti?

HN: Nicoletti. That's when I met the Nicoletti's. Leonard Nicoletti was in my class. And I was there for three years and then I went to Copperfield. Copperfield at that time was the place where the greatest collection of Mexican people were. Now many of them were from Mexico.

VM: In what year was this?

HN: In '40, 1940.

VM: Have they been there for a long time or did they just move in during the war?

HN: No, they moved in before the war, and they had, they lived in a place called Dinkyville most of them. Dinkyville was up in the mountains up about Hyland Boy or up above Copperfield. They had a place where they used to drive the little locomotives they called dinky engines at night and leave them. These people lived up there in shacks. They were bad, and in some places there would be one water hydrant for four or five families but they were pretty nice people. I had, in particular, a Mrs. Leyba, who the second year I was there had her fifteenth baby and died with it. Some nice kids, really some nice children.

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VM: Now in Lark, when you began teaching there, did you have many Mexicans in your class?

HN: Only one.

VM: Only one. When did you begin having a significant influx of Mexicans in your class?

HN: Well, I moved into Copperfield and while I was in Lark I don't think I ever had more than one family of Mexican origin or Mexican surname. I had many Greeks and Italians. Tibola, little Joe Tibola we called him and I don't know if you know Joe or not.

PN: I know the family. I was going to ask you what type of students were these Italian and Greek and also Mexican?

HN: Well, it depended on the conflict between the language. If children came in as they more often did in the first generation, where there's a strong conflict between their own language being spoken all the time at home and then coming to English, was very difficult. This happened more often with Mexican families than it did with Japanese or with Greek, and yet many of these people now...I have now in Sandy a family of Rodriguezes that we that are migrant workers that work for a Japanese family and they have been coming back to my school for seven year and every year, everytime they start school they have to repeat the first grade. So there goes two years in first grade and then they go through because it is that much difference in the language. We start with the phonic program and they have to learn a new set of phonics because they have their own set and

they have to learn a new one. And this has been a wonderful family. We're tickled to death to see them come back. We just love to see the Rodriguezes, and then they have about six children going back to school.

VM: In the '40's, when a large, I think, a large number of Mexicans started moving in not only from, well, especially from Colorado and New Mexico, I think. And also during that time you have quite a number of Puerto Ricans brought in didn't you?

HN: A little bit later. I think the Puerto Ricans came in after '45.

VM: '45.

HN: In '46.

VM: Did you notice or were you aware of any...

HN: Every time they got in the shower together.

VM: Any reaction between the two?

HN: There was a conflict. Every time they got together. Now I don't know the reason, but I suspect the reason is that the Puerto Ricans came from an area where there was a greater chance they mixed with Negroes and this was one of the contentions, and many Puerto Ricans that we had ran to red hair and a different kind of hair. We know that there are different hair characteristics in so called races and we had many Puerto Ricans come in and they were a different looking kind of people and, of course, they had a different background but they looked different. They didn't get along well together at all.

VM: How did they along with, say, the Puerto Ricans as a group?



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With whom did they get along best should I say?

HN: They got along best with the white community or amongst themselves. They had to be watched. We had a Puerto Rican that must have procured at least twenty driving licenses for the other Puerto Ricans because he could speak English well and he was a good driver. He made a nice little sum. They could drive all right, but the test is the hardest to do! It's like taking your citizenship. You have to remember the names of the people and things that no American learns in order to become an American citizen and it's foolishness. There are other measurements of people in history.

PN: Do you think that this, when you mentioned this fact and the flashing back to what you said about the Americanization classes, I know that a lot of the Italians did not get their naturalization papers until later, especially in the '20's, do you think that the fact the examination was a little bit out of key might have contributed to this?

HN: Yes. I had a friend named Gasparo. I don't say it right but he was from down in the tip.

PN: That's where my father is from, just about...he's in Cosenza, Provincia Cosenza.

HN: And Gasparo murdered the English language and the Italian language. He would get a paper and translate it through the Italians at the boarding house Mouretti's boarding house. This is where I got to learn ---?--- and I taught an Americanization class reserved for the Greeks and the Italians. But at one

time, many Greek women and Italian women, mostly Greek, came into Canada. And the Greek people and the Italian people could go up to Canada by putting up a certain amount of money, could marry these, a certain amount of money to guarantee that they would be taken care of. They could marry these people and bring them back into the United States. Now I know, knew three or four people, mostly Greeks but there were a couple of Italians who did this and there were quite a few Greek girls came into Bingham from there at this time. Well, we had a fellow named Frank Varaccio and he and his wife came to my class, and I had several Greek people that the only thing I could do to teach them was to go back to teach them phonics, and how to read and when it came to history, I said, 'This is not important. Yes, it's good to be a citizen but you might be better off if you don't have citizenship. Yes, you can always be equalled. But the things that you have to learn to be, to pass the citizenship test are not very good. Now Gasparo always said 'rep-resen-ta-tive' and he would read a book and read American words with Italian ---?--- I couldn't understand.

PN: A lot of the Italian words are the same in English except they're just pronounced different.

HN: He brought me a couple of rab-bits one day he shot with a rif-la. He told me a lot of other things that day that I could not understand. And yet he could read the English language and say the words outside of some of these books. And finally in order for Gasparo to get his citizenship papers, he had to take

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about a half dozen people from Bingham and go into the citizenship court and they had to stand up and testify that he was a good solid citizen who wanted to become an American. He didn't want to die before he got his citizenship and the judge had to award him the citizenship papers not on what he could say about the United States history and constitution.

PN: But on his desire to become a citizen.

HN: But on his desire and on the kind of a citizen that he was, and they got him a citizenship.

PN: Who were his eight representatives? Were they just various nationalities?

HN: Oh yes...the postmaster who was named Earl James and Johnny Creeden, an Irishman who...they were good solid citizens.

PN: When were you an Americanization teacher, instructor?

HN: Oh, from about, well, let's see...I think it was mostly in '47, '48, till about '52.

PN: Were there a lot of nationalities that came?

HN: I never had more than seven or eight, no. I never had more than seven or eight in class and it was mostly that they wanted to learn to read and write. Because I, my custodian's wife, she was Muretti, Carlata, we'd go up and ask if she would cook dinner for our Jaycees and she say, "When do you want it?" and I said, "Tuesday", and she wanted to know which one Tuesday or Thursday.. which Tuesday, there's two Tuesdays. She had an awful time with the language.

VM: Now how long did you remain teaching, until what year?

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HN: '54, I think.

VM: Did you imagine while you were there you saw quite a little bit of labor strikes that occurred?

HN: only once or twice did we ever have any, and at this time there was a strike on the Kennecott, and it didn't amount to much. It was more a threat of a strike. In fact, I can't remember being in Bingham when there was a strike. Now there were strikes in Lark. And these were rather tough strikes. I worked in the mines in Lark, too, and we paid 25 cents a month out of our salaries to help organize the Utah Copper, because in 1939 they had a terrific strike in Lark. I think these people were out six or eight months, and they didn't come back in until just before Christmas and that wrecked that community.

PN: Were most of the people in favor of a union up there? Because these strikes had a tendency, like you say, to demoralize a lot of people there, and the unions were synonymous with strikes and I was wondering if that aspect tended to make the people less pro-union that...?

HN: I think as the town matured and got older and more of the people who were on the operational or on the supervisory end; as they moved out of Bingham down into Copperton, starting in '27, the more of those people that left town the less influence they had. By this, that didn't mean the less influence they had the more influence the unions had. But I think that unionism was sold to the laborers by other laborers. That is how the unions were organized.

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VM: Did you know any of the organizers?

HN: Well, not really. One of the best I knew was this Joe Dispenza who was, who is the man, you might say, mostly the big man for Kennecott now.

PN: When was he, when was he at the height of his activity?

HN: I would say in the last 15 years. He was rather late in the scene but he'd been very strong and he does a good job.

PN: He must be a very good leader.

HN: Yes. Joe came into Bingham, I think his mother was a campagno, and Joe came into Bingham rather late as I know him, but he was one of the best organizers. In fact, he is about the only, you might say, organizer and labor leader of Italian parentage I knew. He didn't know the language too well, but he learned fast and he is still good. He's a well-liked fellow. He was just elected as the director on the State Firemen's Association for Board Members and he's been very close to Bingham all the time he's been working. Now the fellow that's up there now that just, well, he's still the mayor.

PN: Jouflas?

HN: Greek.

PN: No, Jouflas is down at Price. Oh, I know who you mean. The name slipped me.

HN: Yes, it slipped mine. I didn't write any Greek names down but his dad ran a store there for years and years. Down in old Bingham. It was there when I went there in 1919. We lived

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just up the street from the store...it's not Jimus?

PN: Yes, isn't that what it is?

HN: No, Jimus ran a drug store. He married a guy his wife was a Strike...the guy that's running for State Senator. I can't think of his name however I tried. His name is Pete. But he belongs to ---?---. I go back and forth to the ---?--- because I like it and he's been there for years and years and they are still in business, as far as the town goes. They paid the ---?--- farm a fare of 50 dollars a month up until I know they got ---?--- for years and years and years. It was a strong town. They were hard to get rid of. When you take somebody with all of Kennecott's resources and it's taken them, I would say, since 1955 until now to buy all of that and that's a long time. And they offered some good prices. This guy held out for 125,000 at the beginning and I think he got more.

VM: That's a little appreciation in your, a little bit of appreciation in your home.

HN: No, like there was an awful feeling. I know there were many people that left Bingham because there was getting to be too many Mexicans there and they settled a lot down in Holliday, and there were some people that were fine people, and there were some that reacted the way they should the way they were treated. Of course they were not considered civil. And I've always felt that Christ only said one thing, he said, 'If the lamb is lost, go find it.' He didn't say worry about the rest of the flock, did he? He said find that lamb. Well, to me, the

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least was as important as the most and I've always stuck up for them and I like them and I got along with them. Would you want your daughter to marry a Mexican? If she wanted to. And sure enough my son wound up marrying a Mexican and he's still married to her. Now most of the marriages up there were very difficult. A lot of them have held up. And I think my son's as well. He's, out of my three kids that have married, he's the only one that hasn't been divorced.

VM: On these marriages, who did they tend to marry more with, the Italians or with whom while you were up there and you observed?

HN: Well, while I was up there, no. I would say that they would not necessarily be Italians. It would not be Greeks because Greeks stay very close together. I would say middle...middle Europe, Italians, and that they mix rather easily but the Georgians, the Armenians, they don't like to mix.

VM: How about in terms of the Mexicans with whom, or when ever they were marrying out of their own nationality, with whom did they marry?

HN: Well, one of them married a Jewish. Of course maybe she wasn't a Jew because her mother wasn't a Jew. You see her father was a Jew and her mother was a Stranger and the child's a Stranger, so. But they have married. I think that I can't say that I can see much difference outside of the Greeks, and even the Greeks now have married, many of them are marrying outside of their nationality. I can't say that the Italians or the Greeks or the Mexicans are doing any more or any less. There was been an awful

lot of marriages in the last twenty years as far as I can see. Many of the kids that I had up there, the Leybas and the Ociolla. I always have to think of Philamino Ociolla. I just met him the other day and I didn't know his name and he said Ociolla, and I said Philamino...well, that was his dad's name. And his dad, according to story when I moved there was a boarder in the Gomez home and pretty soon Mr. Gomez moved out and Mt. Ociolla moved in. He had four or five children quite young in those days. They were really nice kids. And, like I say, I think that it's one of the best experiences that could have ever happened to me to go to Copperfield and to go to Bingham from the time I was ten years old.

PN: A very cosmopolitan type of environment.

HN: One of the happiest towns I've ever been in. At Christmas time or a week before Christmas it was hard to make your way up the stree tand get at the top and back home altogether sober. And it didn't matter who you were.

PN: What brought about most of the tension? Was it just different naitonalities trying to exert their force...?

HN: I don't think there were many tensions. I do feel like the custom was for the largest family to be Mexican and Italian and they would very often have less because the money wouldn't go as far. The cahnces that you could get these foreigners to sign over their check to a store was something because they didn't have enough money when they came in or they would get into trouble and they would sign over the check. The check



would go first to the store and the store would take out what they charged and then give it back to them. I think these were some of the abuses. Now, there were a lot of people. Yes, there were many, many people that would have nothing to do with Italians, with Greeks or with Japanese. And of course, a lot of these people didn't care. And almost all of these people at one time or another were on the opposite side as far as wars go. When you say Mexico, you go back to '36 when Mexico took over everything. Well, they paid for it, but they didn't pay the asking price and the Italians were on the side of the Germans and we had Italian prisoners of war were brought up to Bingham.

PN: How were they received?

HN: I don't know. As far as I'm concerned, they were received all right. They were kept in town and they let them come out there and see Italian friends and Italian people because there was nothing in Salt Lake around for them, and they were treated very well.

VM: Did they work at all in the mines or...?

HN: No, they were prisoners of war and they were not allowed to work, but they did allow them to come out there and meet the people and some of them came back after.

PN: Do you know any of their names?

HN: I don't know any of their names.

PN: Because I'm interested in interviewing prisoners of war that returned.

HN: There's a Mrs. Muretti that lives on about 1561 South Temple. That's about 63 or 64 that came over when she was about 18. I don't know, you might talk to her because this is the place where they came and you might find out. See, when you come down to these things, anything that I say I can't prove, just my feeling about them. Most of the things I talk about are heresays and the one thing that Gasparo and his citizenship this I know. Now, the other things are stories.

PN: Well, a lot of what you said I heard from others.

HN: I noticed, did you ever know a Herado?

VM: No.

HN: Well, it seems to me that when I was up in Bingham we had a little kid whose mother worked in the restaurant who ran the streets and I thought his name was Alex. Could not have been, but I noticed his name. He is a Republican delegate. Do you know him?

VM: No, I don't.

HN: Well, I don't know if he left, but he ran the streets in Bingham. He was never at home, and you know the buses used to come up, the tourist buses, and he used to run along the side of the street and bum money, nickles and dimes. Of course, everybody would do that. He'd carry around a little piece of rock, ore sample. The kids from Copperfield made small fortunes selling ore samples.

PN: They probably made more money that they did mining the ore.

HN: You'd steal them from the U.S. and sell them as ore from the Kennecott. Now this Bushelshack Joe always kept a beautiful rack of specimens. People, tourists, would come up and, of course, they climb over and they heard about his specimens and there was always his own specialty set. But if you had enough money you could buy it and the next there would be another set. His specialty set. His daughter sold up in Copperfield. He had a shack up in the middle of the small mountain, and she sold specimens and tied flies and everybody up there. Sunday was just a hayday for the kids, because they built a tunnel between Bingham and Copperfield a mile and a half tunnel and all you had to do was wait and here it comes, the tourist up inside their own cars and out that tunnel very slowly, and the kids would hop running boards in those days. The kids would hop up all the way from six years and up. In fact the first year that I went up there I had a boy who was a pretty tough, a pretty tough kid. What was his name, Salazar, and he, the year before, had, with the school supervisor, written up quite a story on, about Kennecott and the mines and the way people lived. And they took him around all these schools in the fifth grade and he'd talk about the program. And in our school we had a set of specimens of different types of ore, and I had a girl by the name of Isabel who was in charge of this table and somebody stole a rock. A beautiful specimen, and he blackmailed that girl into paying him five dollars for losing that was his. He said that thing was worth five dollars or more because he could have sold it to the

tourist, and she paid him the five dollars. I didn't know about this at the time, and he was his sister. This was Glenaday's program and his sister is on the left.

VM: Of the Mexican students that you did have throughout the year, did you notice any disportion members of males to females?

HN: I don't remember anything like that, no. I do remember the good old ---?---, I could. They were more colorful and how would you say it, they showed less resentment and...

PN: Why do you think that was?

HN: I don't know. I'll tell you waht I found about Mexican girls here at school here. That regardless of how well they're liked, how pretty they look, and how well they speak English, by the time they reach the sixth grade, there tends to be a withdrawn with other girls. Not that they actually dump them, but they don't include them as much. By the time theyget into juniorr high, they are two sets of people and it's a very unusual girl that ever makes it through high school in this area with the same kind of friendship she had in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. This is nineteen, eighteen. I've seen this go on. I had a beautiful Mexican lady. She was rather dark but she was beautiful. Her name was Larsen and her girl was much lighter than she was. And in the fourth grade when they left here to go up to another school in another area this girl had very many friends. Among our people we don't have very many, a very large Mexican population, not even ten families here,

while I had forty families in Copperfield, and she came down in the sixth grade and she didn't know what to do. She was heartbroken and no, they hadn't rejected her girl but they were not including her.

VM: Have you been able to come to any theories why this might happen?

HN: Well, yes. But this is, it's something that we don't know how to teach a pupil that the characteristics and looks are not the important center but relationships. And you always mistrust somebody that is different than you, even if he is born, even if he has a last family name you know these families in one of the small units and it's hard for them to mingle. They had to have some kind of strap to hold them together. Here it's Mormonism. Not too many people that are Mexican are Mormon, although there are more and more all the time. I had a teacher who came out from Salt Lake. Her father runs the El Charro and she taught kindergarten class and she was a wonderful teacher. I would say one of the best teachers, one of the two or three best teachers that I have ever had in my life and she was an L.D.S. Mexican. Where did they go to church? They go to a Mexican American Church down in about Eight South. Did they go to church? No. Why? Because they weren't comfortable. And you know why they're not comfortable? Of course, I'm not comfortable either but that's very different for me. And so I can see. I can see. I know how they feel. And I don't know what it is. I think it's probably, and this is an awful bad observation, but not very many of us are Christians. And we heard about Christ say it but

we don't quite live it. And I don't want to keep coming back to that because I'm not a practicing Christian. I try. And I'm not a practicing L.D.S. either.

VM: Now, over the years that you've been teaching and especially in relationship to Mexican students, what are the most significant changes that you have noticed in students of Mexican nationality or Mexican heritage?

HN: I don't know. I don't know how you mean in their relationship with other people.

VM: That and just in terms of being second and third generations. What has this done to them as people? Have they lost their language, or have they become more Americanized, or what types of problems have come up that were not existing before?

HN: Well, I don't think that the problems that I can observe at first hand, in the elementary, they're not very great. They're accepted much more. It's only as they go into junior high and the senior high that I noticed that there is separation and I noticed that they tend to gather together where they were separated before, because we always try to separate them and we always try to do all that we can.

PN: That's what I was going to say. Since they, when they are in the younger grades, I know this has happened with the various nationalities; Italians, Greeks, or whatever, the kids tend to unite and mingle when they are young but as they get older they drift and I think a lot of that might be from the influence the find in the home. Because the parents will say, 'Oh, I

don't want you running around with him because he's Italian or Mexican or whatever.' I think that a lot of it is just being instilled in the child from the home.

HN: Well, I know of many, many more marriages between Italians and other people and Mexicans and other people and Greeks and other people in Bingham that I ever knew down here. I had a real good friend, John Cridon. He was a fireman; he graduated a couple of years before I did. His youngest, next to the youngest daughter married Pete Massa, an Italian. We went to his second daughter's wedding and, of course, they held it in Bingham and it's a different kind of wedding. There I have a sister...my sister's boy who married another Italian, named Branterro. I find more and more and more of these mixtures, more and more marriages. Now the Massa girl, definitely Italian looking if you say, hair color and things like that... and both of these girls will carry an Italian name. They'd be what, half-blood Italian if there is such a thing, but they're accepted in our community down here quite well, very well. They're much more accepted in Bingham and this is where they held the marriage and this is where most of the people came, even though the groom was not from there and...

PN: What were some of those weddings like? I can imagine, but I would like to hear from you. Were they very festive?

HN: Well, I went to a Muretti wedding and the Muretti girl married a Basque, and we happened to be quite close so my daughter was a ring bearer and we started out in the morning and on 21st

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South. I think there's a hospital up North.

PN: On 21st?

HN: Yes. It was an orphanage.

PN: St. Ann's.

HN: We started out there at 10 o'clock and the marriage took place and then we went to breakfast, and then we came home and rested awhile, and then we went to the reception. We rested about two hours and it was 12:30 that night before we got through. And it's just the same why with the Greeks. Everybody's invited and everybody comes. Everybody goes out of their way to do all they can, and this is the same with the Greeks. Now I've had several Greek friends, good Greek friends, and we'd go to one of those...you go to the reception, and then you go to the dinner, and then you go to the wedding, big church, and then you go to dinner, and then you go to a reception for six to eight hours. This is the same way that the middle European people do when they have, when they have a Christmas or a wedding or something, they go all out and they do all the things that very many people say are the fun things to do. They mingle with each other, they have things to drink, they have things to eat, they dance and they have a good time. And they invite everybody.

VM: The description sounds like you had more than an enjoyable time up in Bingham throughout.

HN: I loved it. Like I say, my dad moved out in 1925 and I swore



I'd ride my bicycle back and forth. And I swore I'd go back, and it took me until 1936. Then I went to Lark in '37. Three years in Lark, four years in Copperfield and ten years in Bingham. And they had to move me out; I didn't want to leave. But they said, 'The school wouldn't last too much longer. You need another school to go to.' And I said, 'I don't want to.' But they moved me to Sandy and I've kept my ties with Bingham and the people in Bingham. Many of them have moved into the Sandy area, so that's mostly my association. First I married a Mormon from Sandy and then I also had my relations there.

VM: What kind of acquaintances did you have from being, especially in terms of Greeks and Italians, Mexicans, which of these do you think were most concerned with citizenship or identifying with as an American or working with the United States?

HN: Well, this was the most problem with the Mexican people because of the Mexican people came down around ---?--- and they were citizens, but it seems to me that the Italians were more than the Greeks, the Greeks didn't know any....?

VM: What about the Japanese?

HN: I don't know about the Japanese. I had a Jap camp right across the front and I don't know how soon, how much they worried. I don't ever remember any problems. See the Japanese taught their children English very early, brought in teachers and so did the Greeks. They brought in teacher to teach their children Greek and English, and they made sure that they could speak English. And I just, I don't feel, you see by the time

I went back in '36 and '37, and back into Bingham in '44, most of the Italians and most of the Greeks were citizens because they had grown up in Bingham and they were.

PN: Their children and their children's children all are born here so they are naturally citizens.

HN: Yes, so these people had been there since 1910 on and things like this up in Hyland Boy. Now I don't know when Mrs. Muretti ever got her citizenship. She came in there when she was about 18. Her husband came in when he was 21. At that time he had been in the Italian army which as an allied. I don't know whether he got citizenship for that or not but he spoke very poorly. An outstanding citizen but he didn't speak too well. You know somebody goes looking for the private, and I don't know what they hell they're talking about the first time. I had a lot of trouble, and he used to come to me and he said his teacher wants something. 'Will you go and find out?' And I'll find out and tell him and then he'd tell me the answer. I carried him home the day he died. He had a heart attack in school and I carried him up and took him home. And I called the doctor and the doctor was there when we got there, but he died in fifteen minutes and he did this working in the mines. This is one thing I say about them, they were really workers. First powder monkeys I ever say were Italian. Did you ever, do know what a Powder monkey is? After he came down, I don't know whether I told you this on the telephone or not but the mortician had a couple of powder monkeys

and I had to know what a powder monkey was. So I went and saw them dead, the guys who had been killed by an explosion, and I think I told him. The mortician tried to get up a poker game, and they had to have at least four to play poker and they only had three so he had an Italian man that had been killed. He brought him out, sat him in a chair and they played poker. They caught him and they took his license away from him. So he went to Copperfield and opened a beer joint up there in a restaurant. Yes, this is what they say and they swear to it. And I don't know whether you can find documentary documentation.

PN: That's beautiful. I don't know how beautiful it is, it's kind of morbid.

HN: Well, he was there when he showed us the powder monkeys and they, yes, he took us in and he let us all fear the dead people and they had been pretty well.

PN: Was he an Italian mortician?

HN: He was an Italian. Well, at that time you see, I think the jobs are handed out in proportion to your ability to speak English. And the less you understand, the more...the kind of a job...they're dangerous jobs. These guys I guess had some powder frozen in a pipe and they were trying to saw it out, pushing it out.

PN: Well, I think we'll end this interview and I would like to thank you very much because you've been so helpful.

HN: I don't think I've been of much help.

PN: Really, it's been great and I'm sure that...

END OF TAPE

FATHER FRANCIS B. PELLEGRINO

Salt Lake City, Utah

Tape No. I-14

An Interview By

Philip F. Notarianni

November 27, 1971

American West Center

University of Utah

Utah Minority Series: Italian

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THE FOLLOWING IS AN INTERVIEW WITH FATHER FRANK PELLEGRINO ON NOVEMBER 27, 1971 IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH. THE INTERVIEWER IS PHIL NOTARIANNI.

PN: Father, to begin with could you please tell me when and where you were born?

FP: Yes, I was born February 18, 1927 in Helper, Carbon County, Utah.

PN: Where were your mother and father born?

FP: Well, my father was born in Italy. John Pellegrino was born May 30, 1902 in Province of Catanzaro, southern Italy, Calabria. He came to this country in 1919, arrived on Thanksgiving Day, 1919 in Ellis Island, New York. He was seventeen years old. My mother was born in Sunnyside, Carbon County, Utah, on the 8th of December, 1910. My mother's name is Josephine Angelina Migliaccio.

PN: Could you tell me why your father came to the United States? Did he ever relate this to you?

FP: He was the youngest of the family, the youngest boy of the family, and he was too young to be drafted in the First World War. Three brothers were in the service. He had a brother here working in Utah, my uncle Bruno Pellegrino, and he came to live with him and his wife in Castle Gate, to work in the coal mines.

PN: What conditions existed in Italy that forced him to come over?

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FP: Well, economically they were very, very poor. My father tells me that it was very difficult to eke out an existence. It was just rural, agricultural livelihood and he could see no future in working as kind of a hired hand on property that didn't belong to them. He didn't have any future there like getting married and raising a family under those conditions. There was no future to it.

PN: Where did he stay when he arrived in Utah?

FP: Well, for a while he lived in Ophir-Stockton, Utah, near Tooele. He lived there with his brother Bruno Pellegrino and wife. His wife was of Italian parentage, too. Rose Rigga was her maiden name. The Rigga family from the west side. He lived with them for a while. I think then they lived here in Salt Lake for a while on the west side. My uncle worked for a streetcar company or whatever it is here in Salt Lake. An old man by the name of Manuel Campana got them the job, the old man Manuel. My uncle then worked in Park City for a while and then the prospect of making more money, the idea of getting rich quickly appealed to them so they moved to Castle Gate, Carbon County, went to work in the Castle Gate coal mine. They moved down there and had a home, my uncle and his wife, and my dad lived with his brother

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and his sister-in-law.

PN: Which coal company did they work for? The Pleasant Valley Coal Company or Utah Fuel?

FP: It would be Utah Fuel, let me think now. I don't think that it was Pleasant Valley. In those days it was--you see Castle Gate and Kenilworth are combined together now. So it would have been the old Castle Gate number one or two mine.

PN: Utah Fuel.

FP: It must have been Utah Fuel.

PN: What type of treatment did they receive from that particular company at that particular time?

FP: Well, there were no labor unions. I don't think the labor unions were established this far west. They needed their pay of course. There were not too many safety regulations as you will find out later as I tell you what happened. Very little, in fact. They went to work and they worked five or six days a week.

PN: Excuse me, what year was this that he went to work?

FP: Oh, this would be 1922, '23, 1924 in the mines.

PN: Was he involved in that 1922 strike in Carbon County?

FP: Yes, they were involved in that strike. They were involved in the strike. None of the violence actually, but I am not sure how they were involved. They were certainly on the side of the working men to



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demand better conditions I suppose.

PN: Your father, did he ever relate to you any of the instances?

FP: Not about the strikes. He was too new at that time. He couldn't speak English very well. I don't think that he was too involved, but they talked about violence in the different mining camps where there was actually violence. Like up in Kenilworth, I suppose, maybe Hiawatha, Wattis, even East Carbon and Sunnyside where the coal mines were, and Moreland. Let me see where some of the other places were. There was violence between the Italians and the Greeks. Pro and con, those that were for management, I suppose. The men at work used to call them scabs; I know that and the working men who were trying to unionize and demand their rights, as you know. The foreigners, they were the foreign element.

PN: Could you describe to me some of the instances that your father might have related to you concerning the treatment that he received while in Carbon County from the non-Italian residents there?

FP: Well, you see we lived in--I was born in 1927. Should I mention the explosion at all first?

PN: I will sort of guide you along.

FP: So in 1924, two weeks before the big explosion on

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Saturday morning, the 8th of March, 1924, many of the single men were laid off. I just recently spoke to a man who was there. A man by the name of Taylor, Jim Taylor. Jim is the janitor out in Tooele, St. Marqurite's Church in Tooele. He is a convert to the Catholic church from Mormonism. Father Sullivan just received him into the church. He is a very fine man about my father's age. He was laid off at the same time my father was laid off at the mine. He remembers very, very clearly what happened. Most of the single men were laid off. Then two weeks later they went into the mine. They knew that this black dust was there and all it would take was a spark to blow things up and that is exactly what happened. Through some reason of the lack of safety, the safety element or whatever it was, the shift went into the mine and there was an explosion early in the morning. And at least 179 men killed including my two uncles. My dad's brother was Bruno Pellegrino who was thirty-four at the time and another by the name of Bruno Mascara(?). An uncle by marriage, a great uncle by marriage married to my grandmother's sister. They were both killed. The bodies were burned beyond identification. They began to bring them out. I heard my father tell this, and my mother, too. She was

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young. They used canaries, they used white mice to go into the mine because the gas was so powerful. One man, an official, was killed; the gas actually killed one of the first to go in there. He was brought out and he died. It was days before they could actually bring these people out. They brought them to a temporary morgue in the amusement home in Castle Gate. Then it was a matter of identification. It was only by the means of dental identification, rings, watches, any personal effects, medals and that is how my dad tried, but he couldn't find his brother. It took a man by the name of Tony Fortorerro who was from Dad's home town who actually made positive identification and then his wife was living here at the time and he was brought up here for burial. The rosary, the mass were all from Cathedral parish. He was buried at Mt. Calvary. Then she died about four years later. She had a heart condition. In the meantime my father, in 1925, the next year, having known my mother's people from the old country, grandparents, married my mother on June 20, 1925. Then I was born in 1927. We lived in Helper until '32. In '32 because of the Depression we went to move to Kenilworth. It is a mining camp. It is about four miles northeast of Helper. It was one of the finest

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of the mining camps, but it was a camp. A company store, theater, confectionery, a Jackson family was in charge. They were the superintendents. There were two or three brothers. They were fine people. They were English, Episcopalians, probably masons, too. There was a company doctor, Dr. Robertson. I remember this well. I started school in this little mining town. I was only five. I started first grade in school. I went to school there for five years. Some of the conditions--I can give you a picture of the conditions in Kenilworth. My dad had worked in several of the mines. After Castle Gate, that had sort of frosted him on the coal mines, the terrible danger of the coal mines, although when I was born he was working at a place called Heiner or Peerless, New Peerless. He had worked at Spring Canyon for a while and a couple of the other mines. Well, then he got out of the mines and decided to work for the railroad. He then began to work on the Denver Rio Grand Western Railroad. He worked on the section first of all. That is because of the depression, because of the rent, the tight money situation they decided to move to Kenilworth where they were rent free in a little railroad home. My brother was a little younger than I, two or three years younger

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than I. There was just the two of us. We lived in sort of a--well, it was almost a railroad house, small railroad house. We lived for five years in this mining camp. My dad working not in the mine, but outside of the tipple area cleaning railroad cars for the D&RG. We lived here for five years sweeping off the coal and cleaning. He was never in the mine actually. We witnessed there through many of our friends: Greeks, Italians, Austrian people, Hungarians. We witnessed the power of one of those. It is sort of portrayed in the song. Not "Big John . . . [I owe my sole to] the company store"--what is the name of that song? It is a coal mining song, the story of this one day going deeper and deeper in debt and no richer and no poorer. Okay, we used script, this I remember very well. We actually used script money. It was the actual means of exchange that we used. They had a free show on Thursday night for the whole camp. The company owned the store and the hospital including the company doctor and all. Everything was under control unless you had a car to get out of Helper to do your shopping, or unless you had say a little farm house, where among friends you were completely dependent upon the establishment there. The men, I don't think were unionized at all,

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okay.

PN: What was the difference between the way you were treated by the, lets say, Utah Fuel Company and the Rio Grande Railroad?

FP: I don't know if the railroad was actually unionized at the time, were they?

PN: No, I don't believe--

FP: I am not sure. They were pushing for unionization which came a little later. Well, I can't see too much difference except that the house that we lived in belonged to the D&RG Railroad. We were rent-free, that I can tell you. We had no rent to pay for five years. This I know. It was built onto. It was an actual railroad car. The kitchen and our bedroom was a railroad car. It was moved from the tracks and brought up into town and made into a very nice little bungalow. You would never know. We were rent-free, the lights were a minimal fee, the water, I don't think we were even charged for water. Just cold water coming into the house. That and no telephone in the house. We did have a small radio. We did have a car, a small car, an old Model T or A. That was the idea of economics, I would say that, Where the people worked for the fuel, or the coal company, paid rent. There was a minimal rent of \$35.00 a month or \$25.00.

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The homes were all owned by the company in Kenilworth and they were paying rent. They ran up bills. They had charge accounts at the store, The Mercantile.

PN: What type of treatment did they receive from the coal companies, from the management?

FP: Well, in this particular camp--and now this is what-- I'm, of course, a little prejudiced here. We were led to believe that we were living in the jewel of the camps. Really physically, geographically, the town was named after a castle in England by the name of the Kenilworth Castle. Three towers. The town was very well situated and had a very fine group of people, about 800 people. A nice school, a very fine school, and in it a library, the confectionery candy store, the Mercantile, post office, the clinic and little hospital. I would say that they were pretty well treated considering although there was now-- looking back, I can see tinge of prejudice and bigotry on the part of the powers, you know, although they were kind people. I must say the Jacksons were a very fine family. They were sort of affluent. They were the ones that had the capital, you know. They were capitalists sort of.

PN: Did your father ever relate to you any incidents of mistreatment that occurred to him at Castle Gate?

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FP: The only thing at the time of the elections, the time that Al Smith ran for president.

PN: 1928.

FP: There was terrible bigotry against the Catholic church, against the Irish people, Catholics in general. Posters were put up. They would put up posters pushing Al Smith. Then the counter, what was the opposition would put up some pretty rotten posters about the Pope, the church, Catholics, foreigners, things like that.

PN: What effect did this have on the Italian population in Castle Gate?

FP: Well, I think that it sort of strengthened them in their own conviction. Basically dig in and do your thing, acquire as much money as you can. I suppose buy a home, educate your children, and--

PN: Do you think that his might have been an impetus for them to become more Americanized or to manifest their own nationality in an American way?

FP: In a sense it was a defense of their own patriotism in a way at the time and their own religion. Although they did have a love for the freedom and the opportunities of this country. I mean, basically it would revert to--they all had that idea that maybe we will make good and go home. But many did not. My



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father did not want to go back to Italy. Basically, it helped them to be better Americans, eventually, once they became citizens, learned to read and write, educated their children, and became part of the American scene.

PN: Did most of the Italians at the time that your father was in Carbon County become American citizens?

FP: A great deal of them, yes. My father became a citizen in the '20s. A great deal of them did. My own uncle was an American citizen and fought in the First World War. Uncle Ben Pellegrino was killed in the explosion, and he was an American citizen. He was in the First World War.

PN: He was in the First World War for Italy, right?

FP: I don't think so, I think as an American.

PN: As an American?

FP: Yes, because it is on his grave here, at the American Legion, American soldier for this country. He had come over earlier than his brother. See, if he was thirty-four. My dad was only nineteen years old. He was quite a bit older, but he fought for the United States.

PN: I see. Was he a resident of Carbon County when he was drafted into the service?

FP: Either Carbon County or it could have been Tooele

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County, it could have been Salt Lake County or even have been Park City. I am not too sure exactly where. I would suspect Salt Lake here or Tooele before Carbon County. He went to Carbon County later, after he came home from the service after the war.

PN: I see. Could we go into a little bit about the prohibition period of 1920? I know that this was a direct cultural clash between the Italians who were used to consuming wine and liquor for their meals. You had a prohibition situation in Utah--well, in the whole country. Could you describe to me some of the incidents which you are familiar with that occurred in Carbon County concerning this prohibition?

FP: Yes, they all used to make their own wine, the Greeks, the Italians, the Austrian people. I suppose everybody in the area made theirs, too. Of course I wasn't born until later, but I have heard them tell this.

PN: I am sure you have received some stories about this. This is the type of thing that I would like to find out.

FP: Okay, my own grandfather--to get back a little bit--my own grandfather Anthony, Tony Migliaccio, and my grandmother lived in Mercur to start with. They lived in Mercur and had a saloon, actually, in Mercur,

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Utah, and Ophir. Then if you read the files in the Tribune you will find one-hundred variations that the town burned. The town of Mercur burned and that is when they moved out. They just about lost everything. They had a saloon, an old western saloon. You know that they were foreigners. From there they moved to Sunnyside. My grandfather, my mother's father worked in a saloon as kind of a cashier or, I suppose, in a way as a professional gambler. In Sunnyside he worked for a Nick Tangaro. Worked along with him, my mother's father. He was a good man. He was honest and I suppose that he made good money. Oh, there were in the course of their marriage, the marriage of my grandmother and grandfather, three children born. My oldest uncle, Pete Migliaccio, my mother Josephine, and my uncle Dominic Migliaccio. Okay, when my mother was five years old, my grandfather died. My real grandfather died. They were living in Sunnyside at the time. They might have just barely moved to Helper. My grandfather went into partnership with a Jim Martell, James Martell in Helper.

PN: The name is familiar.

FP: So they set up--they were partners in a bar business. Prohibition comes along a little later. My grandfather died in 1915. He died of asthma. He was

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only a young man, thirty-four years old. He died in Colorado. He was taken back and buried in Helper. He was buried in Helper Mt. View Cemetery. My grandmother remarried my step-grandfather James Vincent Bruno about 1916 or '17. He was from the same part of southern Italy. He had a son from the old country. His wife had died. He married my grandmother with the three children, my mother and two brothers. Then another son was born, Henry Bruno, who died later at 16 years old. He had a heart condition. They set up their home and all in Helper and did very well. Grandpa worked for the railroad. He had a very good job. In fact, he was kind of foreman or boss. I think he was instrumental in getting my dad and mother in the situation they had in Kenilworth. The home, rent-free and all, to get them from the D&RG. I think he helped. How he did it, he was not amazing, he was ---?--- but pretty well versed. There was a whole section of Helper that is homesteaded in a way that is called the Bruno Acres where he and his brother set up. They went into the sagebrush there and homesteaded. They built their homes, brick homes, stable brick homes, raised their families and all. Okay, along comes prohibition in 1920?

PN: 1919, it was officially.

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FP: Okay, I know that they made their own wine at home. I know--whiskey, rather--whatever they were making. I like to brag about this, priest that I am. I have had oldtimers tell me this. I have met an old man at the hospital, Holy Cross Hospital, Charlie Barber. He said, "Your grandmother is the only one that was not caught by the authorities in making her own homemade brew." She washed clothes, she cooked meals for some of the Italian bachelors that had their own little hamlets over there by the cemetery, or by the park. Would make bread and sell the bread and she would make her own homemade, I guess, whiskey is what you would call it.

PN: Moonshine.

FP: I think what would happen is this. My grandfather was a good provider, but there were three stepchildren and she in order to compensate, to supplement money, made this homemade. I had my mother tell me that they were warned. They knew where the stuff was kept, but never to sell or give it to strangers no matter who came in. My own mother tells me that one day she was kept home from school because my grandmother had to go to town, across the tracks and downtown for shopping or to the bank or something. The others, I think, Uncle Don and Uncle Pete were in school.

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Grandpa was at work on the railroad. My mother was kept home to watch the house, to guard the place. It was on Janet Street. They knew the revenuers were in town. The authorities were in town from Salt Lake, I suppose. They had been warned. The house was locked and she sat on the porch. Well, this one fellow came up to question my mother. He says, "I just need a little, a sample is all." He was ready to give her \$10, \$15, or \$20. I don't know what it was, gold pieces. "No," she said, "We don't have any in our house. This is one thing we don't have." "Oh," he says, "I know for sure that your mother Mrs. Bruno certainly has some of the best whiskey here in town. We know that." She says, "I don't know that. As far as we are concerned we don't have any. We have no whiskey in this house." Even though she was timorous and out of human respect she was a bit afraid, she was more afraid of her mother because grandmother had warned her, "Don't you dare open the house to anyone even if he is friendly, bribes you, offers you money or what." That is what happened. In the meantime grandma heard downtown that they were in town so she rushes home and finds the man talking to my mother on the porch. My mother was just a girl. They had never got into the house. They broke up the whiskey bottles

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of booze all over town, but they never found whiskey in Mother Brunc's house.

PN: Where did they keep it?

FP: Well, it was hidden in the basement. It was hidden in the cellar. She had it in all kinds of places. She put it in places that sort of are unmentionable, too, I would rather not get into that. They were so very personal.

PN: How did they manufacture it? How did they make it? Did she have a still in her basement?

FP: She must have had a still. I think that she had a still in the basement. I know the area. It was like a dirt cellar but very well protected and locked and all. It was a fruit cellar along with homemade sausage and all this and all that. The booze was hidden away.

PN: Did a lot of the Italian people make it in Carbon County?

FP: Yes, they did, and the Austrians and the Greeks, too. Even the Irish, there were Irishmen. Oh, yes.

PN: Did most of them make it for their own home use or did they make it to sell?

FP: I would say that the majority made it for their own use. I would suspect that, but there were key people that sold it for their own profit, I guess. Not

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everybody sold the stuff, no. No, there were--I don't know how to put it exactly.

PN: You mentioned that they had sausage and things of this sort. Did the Italian people get together and make these things.

FP: They did. They did for the killing of the pigs and the following as it was. They went home fed these groups of families, even relatives, or in the neighborhood would get together to slaughter the hogs and make the sausage and everything, the lard. I have seen them make the lard in big tubs and all. The making of the wine, actually when prohibition was over we helped our parents trample the grapes in the basement in the tub. The fruit, the wine fruit to make the wine, sausage, lard--we used to put the olives--they used to cure the olives in crocks. We used to go for pine nuts, and mushrooms; the mushrooms were favorite things, the mushrooms.

PN: What type of social activities did the Italian people participate in?

FP: Not too many social activities, except for the men going to the bars downtown. There were a few theatres in town. A couple of movie houses.

PN: For instance, I will give you an example. In Bingham Canyon, Louis Nicolletti was explaining to me that



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they used to get together on a Saturday evening and dance and things of this sort. This is the type of activity that I would like to have you relate to me.

FP: Okay. If there was baptism, or a marriage, or birthday we would congregate either in groups of the family or neighborhood or a particular group, maybe paisani from one place and they had their little concertinas, their little squeeze boxes, accordions, mandolins, banjos, even actually banjos. This I remember. They used to sing and dance and enjoy food and drink. Sing songs from old Calabria and do dances--the Tarantella. That I remember as a boy, especially around the holidays and that, you know.

PN: Do you remember any of the beliefs, or if you want to call them superstitions, that were prevalent in Carbon County among the Italians when you were a small boy or that your father has described to you?

FP: Well, I can tell you this. This is when I was just a small child. This is faith and a little superstition thrown in. Whenever it rained, whenever it stormed, thundered and lightnined, I can remember my grandmother who is illiterate. She is eighty-four years old now. They had a great belief of sacramentals like the power of holy water, reminiscent of baptism, waters of baptism. Basically

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there is faith here--blessed palm, olive branches, the crucifix, little statues, figurines, holy pictures. I remember my grandmother going out actually with the little--it was like a little basket. They were woven into little baskets on Palm Sunday, blessed palms. They dipped that into holy water making the sign of the cross. Blessing either the porch, the house, or the garden, the animals, the chickens, the domesticated fowl to prevent any harm, fire, or being struck by lightning. Actually it was just a very real thing. I remember that. Saying prayers. For instance, these are basically faith. We will go into the superstition in a minute. Any harm to the eyes, any little malady, a little prayer to St. Lucy [Santa Lucia] for the eyes. Or the blessing of the throat, St. Blaze for the throat. They seem to have saints for every occasion. We still have St. Christopher for traveling. St. Anthony, if something was lost, any article was lost, any animal, money, whatever it might be. Something was lost, pray to St. Anthony, the patron saint of lost articles. A great faith in the Christmas and Easter liturgy. Holy week seems to take on a tremendous meaning. The idea of not playing the radio, say on Good Friday, dancing or things like that. Fasting and abstaining from meat on

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Fridays.

PN: In fact, if I could qualify that I can remember my mother, she would not even cook anything that was even from a meat product such as eggs, lard, or butter.

FP: Yes, that is right; any of the products from these. Okay. We had a belief, I think it came from the old country--I don't know actually where it came from. We had a belief--we said these prayers from where we were without a reason--six Our Fathers, six Hail Marys, and Glory be to the Father six times and all that to the Trinity, in honor of God and Mary and for the Blessed Trinity, for protection, for protection of the soul and body from any malady. I suppose the power of the world, the flesh and the devil from temptation, evil, we used to carry on our persons tied, sewed up in a little leather or cloth container almost like a wallet, a thing that was called holy letter, a santa litra. It was a letter. All it was was an inscription of Christ on the cross. The emblems of the crucifixion, and then a letter that was supposed to have been revealed by Christ to some saint, some saint in the old country describing the acute sufferings, the very intimate sufferings, how many blows he received on his back, how many crowns

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actually, how many thorns in his head, how many drops of blood he lost. It was in honor of passion of the death of Christ, but it was suppose to be a miraculous letter. Not this individual one that we wore, but the original. It had something to do with the passion of the death of Christ. So basically religious, but a tinge of superstition.

PN: Now, this article was brought over then.

FP: Brought over--well, actually we would send for them. They would be sent. They were on a leather, not a leather, but a cloth parchment beautifully done, ornamented.

PN: Is this southern Italy?

FP: The south, Calabria.

PN: Calabria.

FP: The south. Again, when a child was expected in a home. These are holy people, very devout people from--some were Calabrese and some were from Abruzzi, from Bari or Foggia. I remember a family by the name of Piano, Michael and Agnes Piano. She was a very, very devout woman, a very holy woman. She raised a large family. They were neighbors to my grandparents. My mother was expecting me when she was pregnant, and her own daughter was expecting a child at the same time. She brought over these relics, several relics

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of saints and especially the scapular. The scapular is a little cloth article worn on the back and the chest. It has two little strings. It is a miniature of the habit worn by Carmelite sisters, religious persons in religious orders like the Franciscans. This had a very powerful, great protection against any kind of malady that would come to you or any sort of misfortune. Basically faith, but there was a tinge of superstition there. This was placed under the pillow of the mother when she went into labor so that her child would have a happy delivery, but faith in almighty God and in Mary. The power of Mary. They used to pray to our Blessed Mary for a happy delivery and to a saint and martyr, was Santa Liberata her name, for a happy delivery. This was invoked, they're actually invoked. Sometimes they would say the liturgy of the saints in the home of the midwife; if the doctor was available, fine, or whoever was helping with the delivery of the child. This was basically deep faith, but some superstition.

PN: How do you think that these superstitions developed?

FP: Ignorance and I would say faulty education, faulty education on the part of so many that were illiterate.

PN: Do you think that the role of the priest in southern

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Italy to sort of integrate the superstition with religion accounted for some of this?

FP: Well, it's hard to say. I visited there now twice in '58 and 1968 and I didn't notice any problem with the culture there. It was open to music, poetry, reading, to the education of the children in the towns. In those days only a few could be educated. Actually, the elite probably, and I don't think that they were actually; they might have used fear tactics a bit, but the priest was so highly respected more--than say the mayor of the town. He was consulted for just about everything.

PN: Are you at all familiar with the belief that they call the malocchio?

FP: Just a little. We didn't have much of that. The only thing that I can think of, the malocchio or evil eye or to put the spell or curse on a person would be this. The other word that is used is magaria. I am not sure how to translate that.

PN: It's magaria. It would be something to the extent--witchery. Because magar is witch.

FP: Okay, like bruja in Spanish. Okay, witchery. I would say we didn't witness too much of this. Once in a while you would hear someone say they put a spell on that baby. Say that child was born and you saw that

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child for the first time, a new born boy or girl or really a youngster, a young boy or girl. It wasn't so much the older people, it had to do with youth. If a person was not of the highest moral caliber and integrity and they flattered your child too much. They said, "Oh, what a beautiful child, what a handsome child, how nice." The parents immediately went on their guard for fear that some sort of spell would come upon this child, especially if they weren't baptized, if they weren't christened. They were usually christened as babies, as children. And then in order to counteract this flattery on the part of the good well-meaning people, sometimes the godparents, an aunt, an uncle, a friend, well-meaning people would say, "Benedicete" or "Dio ti benedicete" to counteract. "May God bless you." To kind of balance off any type of, they left the way open to, say, maybe the power of the devil. I would suspect that, the power of the devil, flattery, vainglory, or even pride, there was some sort of basic faith. I keep going back to this, but a type of fear or superstition, a fear of the unknown, a fear of, say, leaving the door open to some unknown force, evil force, that might enter in and harm the person or the home, or the possessions or the crops or the

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animals.

PN: You basically feel then, that the faith was sort of intermingled with a little bit of these superstitions.

FP: Basically, the faith was there. I would say that the superstitions were superimposed like a kind of frosting. In most cases the superstition it was like window dressing. You know what I mean. It was there, but basically the faith. Even though there was a lack of--they were illiterate, they were not illiterate as far as the basic truths of faith, like the rosary, and the idea of God as a rewarder and punisher, the power of the intercession of Mary, the saints and angles. The spiritual part, the faith was there.

PN: Could you please relate to me if there were any celebrations on the part of the Italian population on the feast days of saints in Carbon County such as there was in Italy.

FP: Well, we didn't actually carry statues around the way they did. The first little church was in Castle Gate. It was St. Anthony's church, with a little bell. The church--I think that the church burned actually.

PN: Let me interrupt you for just, why don't while we are on this idea about the church why don't you relate to me a little about the Catholic church in Carbon



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County and then perhaps mention a few of these feasts that they might have participated in.

FP: Well, the first priests that actually went down into the area, were itinerant missionaries, you might say, coming and going. I have heard names like Father Bona. I think Father Bona baptized my mother and uncles. There were a few others, some Italian, some Irish, Polish, who would go into an area like Sunnyside or Castle Gate and baptize, massive baptisms. Individual, but many baptisms, and say mass in a home, a particular home or a hall, would marry couples, and actually conduct funerals, like at the time of the explosion. Well, I think the first resident pastor was Monsignor Alfredo F. Giovannoni, the priest that baptized me, in 1927. He was the pastor at Castle Gate, at St. Anthony's church in Castle Gate. He took care of the whole county. Then the church moved to Helper. He built the little church on the hill, the old church by the cemetery. In fact, the actual cemetery was known as St. Anthony's cemetery until 1943 when it was named Mt. View cemetery. The majority of the people that are buried in that cemetery are Roman Catholic. Eighty-five percent mostly Italian, from all parts of Italy. He built the church in Price--The Notre Dame de

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Lourdes, Our Lady of Lourdes--and built the rectory, a school--an eighth grade school, the Notre Dame de Lourdes School. Built the Daughter of Charity in 1927 and their convent and then actually he, at that time, when he was pastor of the Carbon County area it was Price Parish Notre Dame de Lourdes. Helper was a mission. Helper and Draggerton and the mining camps. He said Mass in all the camps. He had at the time in the whole territory of the United States the largest parish in the whole United States. It covered the Uinta Basin, Roosevelt, and Vernal. Moab and Monticello as far as the Green River to the Colorado border, all the way up to say Thistle, Scofield, Soldier Summit, all the way up to the Provo area. So he had the largest parish, okay. He would still go out and baptize and say mass and give communion, marry, and bury people in all of these mining camps. At its height Carbon County had thirty thousand people. About 20 percent Roman Catholic. The Greek population was pretty heavy there, the southern population was Protestant.

PN: Was most of this Catholic population Italians?

FP: Most of it. The majority were Italian. The next largest group, I think, was Austrian or Yugoslav people in the Spring Glen area and in other areas



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PN: Now, would the Italian Catholics participate and intermingle with the Catholics that were not Italian?

FP: Yes, because St. Patrick's Day was kept very highly the 17th of March, it was a holiday. They used to have either a ham dinner or a jigs dinner as they called it, with the cabbage and what is it? I am not sure what you call it. The Italians would get right in there with the Irish on St. Patrick's. That I know. I am not sure of the feast that the Austrian people kept. The feast of the ---?--- on the 7th of July. That was not kept, but the solemnity would be up in Rock Springs, Wyoming. Monsignor ---?--- who had a heavily Austrian parish. The other feast like the feast of St. Anthony, yes, many of the Italians remember the 13th of June, lighting votive candles in their homes to these particular saints; St. Francis, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the 16th of July; St. Peter and Paul the 29th of June; let me think just a minute, St. Lucy the 13th of December. I remember the devotion to saints like St. Barbara on the 5th of December where she is the patron saint of artillery, if you can imagine and a protectress against lightning and thunder so many of the Italians have little pictures, holy pictures, and would light candles, actually, and pray or have a Mass said. If

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they couldn't do it here in this country they used to send masses back to the old country, or votive offerings to a particular place or church where these saints were honored. They had patron saints that were very powerful. St. Francis of Paola, the 2nd of April was a patron of Calabria in the southern part of Italy.

PN: Could you relate to me perhaps the role that Monsignor Giovannoni played in, let's say, unifying the Italian Catholics. He was an Italian Catholic priest and I am sure that that meant a lot,

FP: An awful lot.

PN: --to most of those people because he could sermon in Italian, he could hear confessions in Italian. What kind of role do you think he played?

FP: He played a very important role. He came from Lucca, Toscana in Tuscany. He was a university professor and seminary professor. Very well educated with degrees of all kinds, spoke the language beautifully, sang, had musical talent, had an organizational ability, and was a man of great stamina. He was eighty-four years old when he died and going strong. He spoke multi languages and picked up the Italian very well, too. He baptized, I would say, and I don't think that I am exaggerating three, four, maybe five thousand

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Italians in the Carbon County area in his life span as a priest. Which is an awful lot of people to baptize with his own hands. And married hundreds of couples. Baptized hundreds. He was there during the explosion. The day that my uncle was buried at St. Anthony's Church in Helper, my Uncle Ben Mascara, five were buried. He buried five that day, a Mass for five, that were buried at the Helper cemetery. In Castle Gate and all over when there was trouble, he was right there. At the time of the explosion, I didn't mention this, Mitty, Archbishop Mitty of San Francisco who was later the Archbishop of San Francisco, was the bishop of the Salt Lake City Diocese; he came down to visit and offer condolences and sympathy to the bereaved families of not only the Catholics, but the Greeks and all the others. Along with the apostolic delegate to the United States of America, the Pope's personal representative to the Catholics of the North America. His name was Fumacioni Biondi. The apostolic delegate, the Pope's personal representative, Bishop Mitty and Monsignor Giovannoni were the ones who offered sympathy in the Castle Gate area, Helper area at the time of the explosion, which was a real tragedy because there was no family that was not affected in all Carbon County,

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179 men killed. So he traveled, down to Thompson and Sege and Cresent Junction, Green River, to Moab and Monticello, all the way over to Vernal and Roosevelt and did a tremendous job. He did unify the Italians because of this. Like you say his preaching, hearing confessions in Italian, scolding and he had to use force. They did not support him well financially. The Italians, you must get the background to know all this, forgive me, were not in the habit of supporting their priests because they received a salary from the government over in Italy. Well, they couldn't get this mentality better than in America that the United States government or the government of the state of Utah did not support its priests. So it was very difficult for him to obtain funds and, therefore, when he gathered a group at a funeral or a wedding, he would really come through and almost use moral force on their duty and justice to support their priest. He really did a tremendous job in Carbon County.

PN: What type of a reaction did he receive from them?

FP: From some of the men were very, very caustic and critical and there was a very adamant attitude in part of the men. Not all. There were those who supported, but it was mostly through ignorance,

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through ignorance that they did not understand. Because I say you can't run a school, and he started a parochial school in Price. He did a tremendous job for those youngsters bringing these sisters in. At the time of the Depression and all, things were very difficult. It was hard for him to obtain funds, as I say. He built the church in Price and Helper, the school, the convent, the rectory, and really basically planted the church in Carbon County.

PN: Was Catholicism strong among the Italians in Carbon County prior to his arrival?

FP: In groups. In different groups there were those who had the faith that were well versed from the old county. There were those who were anti-clerical. There were those who were ignorant. There were those who were stupid. There were the malicious ones, those who could care less about religion. With all of the bars and with all of the money, the affluence. There was a touch of the Mafia connected with the East. There were for instance in the area, both Price and Helper, houses of prostitution. Things like this he had to combat that. That is the moral corruption part that is absolutely against what the church stands for, any church. So these were the things he was fighting.



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PN: I see. Could you recall your mother ever talking to you about the Ku Klux Klan activity here in Carbon County?

FP: Yes, a little bit of that.

PN: Could you relate some of this to me.

FP: All we remember, I vaguely remember of the Klan's activity, I suppose this would be in the '20s, with the hoods, the white sheets and all, burning crosses actually in Helper on a place called Bunker Hill. It would be East Helper, Northeast Helper. We remember that as children. I think that they did the same in Price area and maybe a few of the mining camps. What they were trying to prove, I don't know. Who they were trying to intimidate I am not sure, but there was activity. In fact I knew one man who was involved in this Klan activity who was a businessman in the town and at night would put on the hood. He was from the south, a southerner.

PN: He was an Italian?

FP: No, no, not a Italian, oh, no, he wasn't Italian. I don't think the Italians were involved in this. This was the Caucasian, the white caucasian, a Protestant of the WASP sort. No Italians involved.

PN: Were the Italians hassled at all?

FP: I don't think so, not as a group, no.

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PN: Do you think that the Klan activity was more directed against the Catholic church rather than the Italian himself?

FP: Yes, I think so. The foreign element. We had very few Negroes, so they wouldn't bother them. There were very few Jews, there were a few Jews in business in Price, very few, but mostly Italian. It was mostly aimed at Catholicism, I would say, and not particularly Italians.

PN: Do you recall any violence being directed towards the Catholic?

FP: No, not of the Klan. No, I don't think so except, oh, yes, as far as jobs went once in a while there was discrimination as far as jobs say in the schools. Actually in the schools.

PN: Discrimination against the Italians?

FP: Discrimination against the foreigner in general. The Italians, yes, because they were the largest group, especially in Helper and some of the camps.

PN: How was this discrimination--

FP: Manifested?

PN: --manifested?

FP: Well, in not letting their children play with the Italian children. They were called Dagos and Wops and foreigners. Or the general title that they were

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included in was dirty Greeks.

PN: This included Italians, too?

FP: Yes, absolutely.

PN: Were they discriminatory against the Italians in any particular way? More so than let's say the Greeks or the Austrians?

FP: No, I guess if you were from the southern part of Europe whether you were Greek or Basque or French or Italian or Spanish. For instance, I have heard this said, that like in plays, school plays they were very conveniently pushed aside in favor of the American born non-foreign element. Or say on the teams, actually on the teams, until our own young people pushed their way through like say the Negroes have done in the world of entertainment and sports. Until they proved by their brawn instead of, well, and their brains, too, that they could do the job, even better than some of them.

PN: Could this be related in the fact that when some of the more prominent kinds began to secure economic gains that they began to become more accepted in the community because they had money?

FP: Yes.

PN: Do you think that this is a criterion of being accepted?

FP: Yes, money or if they sent their children away to school--let's say sent them to school--to the university or to Wasatch Academy or something like that. If their children were sent away to school. Money, financially, educationally, or position-wise. Like the boss or the superintendent or the sheriff, actually, or say if a man became a doctor or lawyer or school teacher. That carried a lot of weight, yes. That was respected, but not the actual nationality or race or ethnic background.

PN: What type of antagonisms did they have in Carbon County between the northern Italians and the southern Italians, if any?

FP: Well, it was sort of an unwritten thing. There was never a real clash as far as physical. There's honor among thieves and, what is it? Blood runs thicker than water. The foods, for instance, now the southern Italians they may cook with more starches and that, but they are known for better cookery, as far as cooking and baking and all. They always outshined the northerners. The northerners did not spend as much time, say, in food and in preparation of edibles and all that. Now, that I remember definitely. They did make good wine, the northerners. The people from Tuscany, Central Italy, Rome. Their wine was good, of

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course, after the mushrooms, as some of the southerns'. Their bread, I suppose their bread was okay. They used to have these ovens, everybody had the outdoor ovens where they made the homemade bread or rolls.

PN: What proportions of the Italian population would you say were northern or southern? Were there more southerners in Carbon County?

FP: Oh, yes, heavily southern. I would say 65 to 70 percent were from southern Italy.

PN: Now, the Italians that were considered to be more prominent, what section of the country were they from?

FP: The majority from the north, I think, because of education.

PN: Why do you--?

FP: I would suspect that they, as you know the north of Italy is highly industrialized. The south is impoverished and it's heavily agricultural and the land has been depleted. There is just no wealth, two and a half million people in Calabria. But the north, yes, I think they came over with--I won't say more money, perhaps some did--but with more education. They had more background as far as literacy went than the southerners did.

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PN: Why do you think they came to Carbon County?

FP: I don't know. I suppose to enrich themselves, to make more money. They figured this was the land flowing with milk and honey and the gold lying in the streets and the opportunity. The opportunity. I suppose Italy was heavily populated at the turn of the century.

PN: So the northerners, then, you feel came here out of opportunity where as the southerners came here out of necessity.

FP: That is right exactly. I would like to add here, interject this. In 1968, my parents and I went over and we were in Italy for two months. We were in Rome for a month. I have a cousin, a priest over there, pastor, and my dad's older sister. We were in two general audiences in St. Peter's to hear the Holy Father Paul VI. The first was on the 22nd of May. We were disappointed because we weren't too close. So we got tickets to be in St. Veronica's Tribune. It is almost like a bleacher near the Papal altar, the main altar. This was on the 29th of May, 1968. On that day the official pilgrimage from southern Italy was there to greet the Holy Father. About 500 from the south of Italy with nine bishops and archbishops from the whole province of Catanza, Catanzaro, Reggio di Calabria. The Holy Father spent a half hour of

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panegyric in praise of the southern Italians. This is no mean person. He was Cardinal Archbishop of Milan which is the largest diocese of all Italy, in the industrial north. It would match any of our big cities here in America, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco. The Holy Father, of course, Giovanni Bautista Maria Mantini, a man who is 74 years old now. This is what he had to say in greeting all the people of southern Italy--two and a half million people. He said, "The southern Italians," and he said this in five languages to 70,000 people in the Basilica. "The southern Italians are poor in the things of this world, but very rich in the things of God. They produce saints, they have a deep piety, a deep faith in God. They are close to the earth, close to mother nature, the land, the good things of the earth, and in that way they are very close to God. And we can learn much from their humility, their long suffering, the tenacity that they have, even we might say, their stubbornness. They do have a type of stubbornness, hardheadedness."

PN: I will vouch for that.

FP: They say the southern Italians are the duri capo toste--have got a head as hard as a donkey. So there is a lot of--but I might just add that he went on a

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lot more, but that is basically what he said. Whereas the people from the north, those people that I know are very good people. There are saints from the north, Mother Cabrini, St. John Bosco, St. John Mariani, Pius X, Giuseppe Sarto, many of the great saints from the north. John XXIII, okay, Saltu Amonte from Bergamo. They are a little more sophisticated. They are a little more proud. I don't want to say proud; sophisticated, high drawer, top drawer, high drawer. Because of affluence, education and all, they sort of lorded it over their southern brothers in the south.

PN: Do you think that these northern Italians were able to integrate more easily in the American life than the southern or do you think that they both had their troubles? And if so, why?

FP: I think that they both had their troubles because-- the southerners found it more difficult, I suppose, to learn the language because of the lack of education. I think that as far as language goes, literary, many of the northerners know. That is why you had, for instance, men taking over the bank and the furniture stores with all they learned.

PN: So it was mostly the northern Italians then that began businesses?



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FP: Yes, although later on, the generation after the southerners took their place in the small business stores. Say the bakery, shoe stores, whatever it might be.

PN: This sort of goes into my next question considering education. I know that in 1919 and 1920, they began Americanization classes, Italian-Americanization in Carbon County which Monsignor Giovannoni was a part. Did your father or did your mother ever relate any of these experiences to you which they had in these Americanization clubs. Did they attend for instance?

FP: No, I don't think that my father attended, as far as he got into the labor unions. They did belong to the Knights of Columbus that was associated with. We were in the Stella D'America that would be the Italian-American--

PN: That is another question that I have. Why don't you relate to me some of the activities in these Italian societies. Some of the things that they did, why they organized, and why people joined. Could you do that for me?

FP: I suppose just for survival and to carry some kind of moral force so they wouldn't be just decimated, sitting ducks. I mean as individuals that they had a moral force in group activity. It wasn't just social.

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I wanted to mention this a while back. We had a KP hall in Helper for social activities. It was the Knights of Pythias, okay. Right. That is what I say. When they saw, for instances, some of their brothers and sisters getting into Masonic lodges and Jobs Daughters and into Eastern Star and that. They figured that this is not for us. This is foreign to us, so we had better coalesce, congregate as far as church, or--

PN: Did they have fraternal organizations in Italy or did they just start these here?

FP: Oh, yes, I am sure that they did. Well, some were to the American scene. Some were just new to the American scene. I am sure that they did have organizations.

PN: So this spirit to organize was not new to them. They just carried that over and established that here.

FP: Right, because the American thing like scouting and all that was unknown for their kids and that. Scouting they had for the children in as far as the church the Legion of Mary or little groups for say the altar boys or the choir and things like that.

PN: What type of activities did these Italian societies participate in?

FP: Well, Columbus Day banquets and they would say march

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on the 4th of July or on days like that, national holidays. On Labor Day they would band together. I remember them with their badges or whatever you want to call them. If there was a dance or if there was a party or sponsoring things for the town, maybe--

PN: What did these badges look like?

FP: Well, they were kind of, to me they were black. They looked like black badges with kind of a little gold emblem on there of some sort. I don't remember them too well. I remember them wearing some means of identification.

PN: Now, this was the Stella D'America?

FP: Yes, I think so. I am not sure what they look like now, but they did have the men and women, and they used to have dances. For instances, there would be a dance or a party at the civic auditorium in Helper or in Price at one of the meeting places, or they would have dinners.

PN: Was your father a member?

FP: I am not sure. My grandparents, yes. My grandparents and uncle, but I don't think that my father belonged to this Stella D'America, although I joined later. I belong to it and the Knights of Columbus. My dad was a 4th degree Knight of Columbus and my brother, too. They had quite a bit of activity associated with the

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church.

PN: Can you recall anything concerning these Americanization clubs that I mentioned. Now, this is rather early, but I was just wondering if your father ever related any of this as Monsignor Giovannoni was a secretary of that club.

FP: Was he? I knew that he was in the Elks or the Kiwanis or the Moose. He was in some of those groups, fraternal groups. And the Knights of Columbus of course. Monsignor was very closely associated with the Capitala and Rinetti families in Price.

PN: This Americanization Club, from the information that I am finding on it, which is very scarce. It sort of drops off around 1920 and then it picks up with the Knights of Columbus. Do you think that the Italians went from this type of thing into the Knights of Columbus? And if so, why?

FP: Because they felt more safe and more secure. It had the approval of the church. They were basically Catholic and they had something that they could step into and feel like they were at home.

PN: Do you think that since the Knights of Columbus was not strictly an Italian organization that they had the opportunity there to integrate with other nationalities?

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FP: Right, the Irish, French, Basque. Yes, absolutely--  
German.

PN: Why do you think that this approach worked?

FP: Well, they had something in common, something basic.

PN: So they used Catholicism as a basis?

FP: Yes, plus the fact of the very name, the title. Christopher Columbus, he is ours. He was Italian, he was Catholic, he is one of ours. So why shouldn't we participate in this. It was a means, it was kind of a defense mechanism and also kind of a new departure. It gave them an opening into some sort of activity outside of their homes and their neighborhoods.

PN: You mentioned the Masons. There were Italians in Carbon County that joined this group?

FP: Yes. Joined the Masons, yes.

PN: Could you give me some kind of reason why?

FP: Well, I know of one case, a relative actually. A cousin from Price who during the Depression was given a job at the Masonic hall as caretaker. He was janitor, caretaker and all. That won his whole family over, he and his wife and their children, their sons and daughters. Just because--

PN: Were there any social benefits to be reaped from being a Mason, or economic benefits?

FP: Oh, economic, yes, as far as work goes. And money,

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yes.

PN: How was this?

FP: Well, they were helped by their fellow Masons, they were certainly given jobs. They had preference over those who did not belong to the Masons. And socially they had their social activities, too, just as we had ours. I know definitely--I question this one cousin. She was from dad's home town and was married in the mother church there. She was Catholic. She used to send flowers to the church. I was stationed in Price for a year in '54, '55, as security assistant to Father La Bloc). She used to have Mass said. She would do it, but the only thing is that she belonged to the Masons. But she still had her Catholic faith deep down inside. She said they were good, they helped us when we needed help. The church wasn't in a position to help at that time, the Catholic church. So all Daughters of Charity did a tremendous amount of charity in Carbon County that nobody knows about--known only to God. As far as helping families, widows, orphans, where there was sickness, where there was tragedy. The sisters and priests have done charity, but they don't advertise.

PN: A final question that I hope we can squeeze in. I have come to a basic conclusion that the Italians in

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Salt Lake County were treated a little different than the ones in Carbon County. Could you elaborate on this?

FP: I don't know what you mean. Were they treated better or worse?

PN: Better in Salt Lake County than they were in Carbon County.

FP: They were treated better. Well, I suppose that the ghetto mentality Carbon County was--here you have the railroad and the mines and maybe they were looked down on as a lower type of people and it was a heavily, predominately heavy, gentile county. So that explains a lot given our culture here in the state of Utah, basically. I think Monsignor Bishop Dwyer related that in his book A Gentile Comes to Utah, okay. You see the picture is so far removed, what 123 miles southeast of Salt Lake? It was sort of a ghetto mentality. The idea that we didn't have the communication at the time, idea of rapid transit and travel. We were isolated.

PN: Do you think that the Italians here in Salt Lake County might have conformed a little more easily than the Italians in Carbon County?

FP: Yes, I think so. Like I say the geographical situation there and the illiteracy, a faulty

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education, plus fear, plus just all these natural things force a people into that kind of--

PN: Okay, thank you very much Father Pellegrino.

FP: You're welcome, Philip.

[END OF TAPE]



ROCCO AND PAUL RAZZECA

Magna, Utah

Tape No. I-12

An Interview by

Phil Notarianni

June 13, 1971

American West Center

University of Utah

Utah Minorities Series

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THE FOLLOWING IS A TAPE RECORDING MADE WITH MR. ROCCA RAZZECA AND HIS SON PAUL RAZZECA ON JUNE 13, 1971 AT MAGNA, UTAH. THE INTERVIEWER IS PHIL NOTARIANNI.

PR: What part of Italy did you come from?

RR: What?

PR: What part of Italy did you come from? Where did you come from, what part of Italy?

RR: Oh, I don't want to do anything.

PR: You tell me. Come on Pa. Turn it off. What's the name of...

RR: \_\_\_\_\_.

PR: And that is?

RR: Provincia Roma.

PR: Okay. Your family never had no priest or anything like that?

RR: What?

PR: You didn't have any priests or sisters? None of your brothers were priests or sisters?

RR: What do you mean?

PR: Your brothers, none of them went to the priesthood did they? I know that for a fact.

PN: Okay.

PR: My mother did, but he didn't. What did you do when you were in Italy?

RR: What?

PR: What did you do in Italy? You had a farm didn't you in Italy?

RR: No, I was doing everything; drove the wagon, the farm, everything.

PR: And when you left to come over here?

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RR: What?

PR: Why did you come over here, why did you want to come over here?

RR: Why did I come over here?

PR: Yeah, why did you want to come over here?

RR: I don't remember it was a long time.

PR: Well, do you figure that it was a better job; make more money here  
or what?

RR: Well yeah, I guess.

PR: Are they satisfactory?

PN: Yeah that is okay.

PR: When you came over here, were you the first one? You had a brother  
over here first, didn't you? A brother came over ahead of you?

RR: I come first then I went back and the brother come before I come.

PR: How old were you the first time?

RR: What?

PR: How old were you the first time that you came over?

RR: Who me?

PR: Yeah.

RR: I don't know around 15.

PR: Did you come over all alone?

RR: What?

PR: Did you come alone, all alone?

RR: No I come, somebody come with me.

PR: Somebody from your town, you came over with another guy. How long  
did you stay?

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RR: In this country?

PR: Yeah.

RR: I think I stay 30 months.

PR: That's two and a half years, huh.

RR: Yeah.

PR: Then you went back?

RR: Then I went back, yeah.

PR: When you came then, you didn't come to Utah. Where did you go then?  
Where did you come when you came the first time?

RR: Oh, I don't know it's so long I can't even remember. Don't ask me  
anymore cause it's worthless.

PR: I'll help you. Was it Sharpsville, Pennsylvania?

RR: That was one time?

PR: Turn it off.

PR: Pennsylvania the first time?

RR: What?

PR: Didn't you stay in Pennsylvania the first time? Sharpsville or  
something Pennsylvania.

RR: In here?

PR: The first time that you come you went to Pennsylvania didn't you?

RR: Yeah.

PR: And you worked in the coal mine or something.

RR: No, I don't remember where I work.

PR: I can remember you telling me that...

RR: Oh, I remember what I must have worked neither.

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PR: But didn't a bunch of guys get killed or something over there?

A boat tipped over or something and killed a bunch of them.

RR: What?

PR: When you were over there beofre, didn't a bunch of guys get killed over there just before you left to go back to Italy?

RR: Nobody get killed.

PR: I can remember the story, but I can't go into detail. Okay, you went back and you stayed over there what two years and then come back?

RR: Oh, ask too many questions; I can't remember that, how long I stay there.

PR: Okay, Then the second time you came back, you came to Utah. Can you remember...

RR: What?

PR: You came to Utah the second trip you came right to Utah. You came along that time didn't you?

RR: Yeah.

PR: You came to Utah because you had your brother here right?

RR: When I come the next time.

PR: Yeah, you came here because Paul was here.

RR: Yeah, my brother was here.

PR: Was Paul working for the Kennecott then? Paul was working for Utah Copper when you came wasn't he?

RR: That's too long, I don't remember where he was working either.

PR: I can remember that Steve up to Tooele said he worked here with him. They worked together. You started to work for Utah Copper in 1911

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wasn't it?

RR: I tell you all about it.

PR: 1911. What was your job? Did you drive a team? A wagon when you first started?

RR: Yeah, I drive a wagon.

PR: What else?

RR: A team of horses.

PR: Then where did you go from there? Did you go right...

RR: When?

PR: When you were driving the wagon and then when you left there, where did you go? Did you go to the bull gang from there?

RR: Don't ask me anymore questions. I don't remember what I do.

PN: Ask him if he remembers the famous strike of 1912.

PR: In 1912 they said that they had a strike. Can you remember anything about a strike up here in 1912 just after you started up there? They said they had a strike around then.

RR: I don't know that's too damn long.

PR: When you went to work for Kennecott, Utah Copper how did the company treat you? Did they treat you pretty good or were they mean? Or...

RR: I don't know if I was working for Kennecott or not.

PR: Well, it would be Utah Copper then. Were they hard to work for or were they pretty good to work for?

RR: After long if unless I tell you don't ask me more questions.

PR: You just keep answering that's all. As far as I know he always got along all right. He never had any problems like that. I don't know



he worked for some foreman that was rather rough and that would be Bull Barton, they called him. And then, I can't remember whether he retired or whether he died. He took the rigger crew from there, and he was the rigger foreman for 32 years, at Kennecott.

PN: What type of work did he do at Utah Copper that might have been dangerous?

PR: Well rigging was always dangerous. Any type of rigging at that time it was always blocking type of work, in pull, mainly just all hand work where today we have cranes to do all that stuff that was all done by hand then. The rigger gang was usually kind of... it was made up mostly of at the time of you foreigners. Your Italians and there was a few Greeks and like that would work on it. It was hard work. It wasn't anything like the operation, it was all hard work. They did all the maintenance work. In 1916 he was the front line foreman or the rigger foreman when they put the big crusher in at the Arthur Plant. That is when they put the big 27 in. One of the big jobs that he was on...Tell you what we'll do. Why don't you ask me the questions, and I will try to answer them and then I will refer back to him off and on, if that will help you. We are not going to get too much out of him.

PN: Okay. Did he belong to the union?

PR: No, he never a union member, he was when unions came in a supervison at that time. But he was one of the supervisors who never had any problems with the union. He was noted as being kind of fair with his people, and the union never did bother him

much at all. In fact, like they said he was the only man around there that could cuss a man out right and never had any repercussions from it. Because of his manner they know that if a guy had a balling out coming he got it. He got it then and there, and then it was forgotten unless the guy brought more on himself. There was no holding a grudge or anything else like that.

PN: Do you recall how he got his job at Kennecott? Did he have a brother that worked at Kennecott?

PR: He had a brother that worked for Kennecottt at that time. I don know this, through what other people have told me. My Uncle Frank who is my mother's brother was working for Kennecott at that time. He came in and went right to work for them.

PN: And how many eyars did he work for them all together?

PR: How long were you at Kennecott, 42 years weren't you?

RR: What?

PR: You worked for Kennecott for 42 years? 1911 to 1952. So that would be 42 years, I think it is three months or six months or something.

PN: Did he live in Magna?

PR: Yeah, he lived in what they call Rag Town, for awhile, and then he moved down here in Magna.

PN: Do you recall what the living conditions might have been like down here?

PR: Well, they learned to live on what they made. I mean there was no going in debt for anything. You lived on your salary. Dad has always been of the old school; if you haven't got the money don't buy it. So he got along pretty fair. Then he was one of

the lucky ones who had a job. He worked for Utah Copper all through the depression. He was never laid off. His living conditions for him were good compared to what they were for the other people because he was never affected by the depression or strikes or anything like this.

PN: He got fair treatment from the company, then.

PR: Yes, he got fair treatment and probably a little better than average due to the position he held at the time. He was given the position, I think he was recommended through a man by the name of Ross Hatton, who would be an uncle to this Dave Hatton. He was recommended because of the work that he had done and the manner and the ability he had in being able to pick up things. How Dad cannot read or write English at all. Everything he learned he had to memorize. Everything was done strictly from memory. He could do a job and in fact, there are still jobs that come up now and he had been retired since May of '52 and I am in a job that he had similar; I am not the rigger foreman, but I am a field repair foreman and cover the riggers. I will come in and ask him questions on jobs because I know that he knows them. It will take him a few minutes, but it will come back to him and he can tell me everything step by step. In about '66 or '64 I think it was, Dad had been retired for 12 years. They had a problem on the 27 crusher. Mr. Baldie, who at that time was the general maintenance superintendent came down and asked Dad about this and what they did and how to remedy the problem. Which he was able to tell him and explain to

him because it was something that had happened once when he was a foreman, and he was about the only one around here that could help them out with it. The rest were all gone. He has got a terrific memory and this has stemmed from not being able to read or write. Anything that he did he had to memorize and he knew that the jobs had to be up in his head because he knew he couldn't go back to notes or anything else. He had no other means of doing a job except from memory.

PN: One thing you could have said and that's when did he become a citizen of the United States, a naturalized citizen?

PR: Oh boy.

PN: Do you recall at all? He probably doesn't remember.

PR: You got your citizen papers when, around 1920?

RR: What?

PR: When did you get your citizen papers? Your American citizen- when did you go get them?

RR: When I was sick.

PR: No, when did you get your citizen papers? Your American citizen- when did you get your papers, around 1920?

RR: I told you that was a long time and I don't know.

PR: I would say it was in twenties.

RR: Leave me alone.

PN: Did he get married here in Utah?

PR: Yes. He was married here, well he came to Utah, then they were married a short time after in Tooele.

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PN: What year was that about, do you remember?

PK: It would be in 1911, September of 1911.

PN: Your mother was Italian, right?

PR: Yes, she had come, her parents had died and my uncle who was the oldest brother had sent for her and she had arrived in Tooele. Dad came just a month or so before she did, I think. Then they were married. They are both from the same town.

PN: Same town.

PR: Same town, and yet I don't think they knew each other there. It was a small town. Well, comparably it would be a farming community about half the size of Magna actually from the description that I have gotten of it.

PN: So they didn't know each other there, but they met each other here.

PR: Yeah and were married. It was more or less just a planned setup in advance from my uncle.

PN: Where did they get married, which church? Do you remember?

PR: In Tooele I believe. You got married in Tooele didn't you Dad? When you got married you and Mamma, you got married in Tooele didn't you?

RR: No I marry...

PR: No, I mean when you got married it was Tooele, you got married in Tooele didn't you?

RR: Yeah, I got married in Tooele.

PR: Was it Father Sanders, the priest?

RR: What?

PR: Was the priest, Father Sanders?

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RR: I don't know who the father was in there, either...

PR: I think that maybe it was. Cause I can remember that he was the one that baptized me. It is kind of hard for him to remember a lot of that.

PN: I know, well he is 85 years old now isn't he?

PR: Yes. Well things are slipping a little for him.

PN: What we are interested in generally is just to find out his treatment over here and his living conditions. From what you have told me apparently he got along well with the men that he worked for and both company and the laborers.

PR: They got along real well all along. As a little kid, I can remember the crew, the riggers would have like beer busts and things which he was always a part of. They would have ball games between the two plants, they would have soft ball games, the two rigging gangs. Which Pete Rinaldi had one and Dad had the other. Dad would never play ball, but he would always go down and watch the ball games and they would have parties and things like that. They always got along real well.

PN: Did he have any trouble at all with anybody that you can recall? Did any of the local residents give him any trouble because he was Italian?

PR: No, not really. Actually this neighborhood here and he lived here just about all the time. They lived where there were mostly Italian people.

PN: Who were some of them? Are they the same Italian families here now?

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PR: Well there was Tony Conti, Sam, Rock Polidoni from Denver. There was a Sarroni, Terry Sarroni's Dad from Denver; they were all in the community here. They pretty well stuck together. As far as problems go, I don't ever recall them saying they had problems because of nationality. Some people might of looked down a little on him but they never said anything to him about it.

PN: Did he belong to any Italian organizations, for instance there, is the Societa...the Christopher Columbus Society in Salt Lake. Did he ever belong to any of these?

PR: No, he never joined any of these. He has been kind of a loner all of the time. He has never been a member of any society or group or anything like that.

PN: Was he active in the church when he first settled over here, or was he pretty much tied down to his job then?

PR: I think that he was pretty much tied down to his job. He went to church as he could, but there wasn't too much that he could do, under the circumstances. Then my mother was sick all the time. Through her sickness the priest use to come up home quite a bit. He was close to the church even though he wasn't a real what you could say mass attender, until after she died. Then after she died...

PN: Excuse me which year was that? Which year did she die?

PR: May of 1950. From then up until about September of 1970, and all the years I can remember he missed mass two weeks. That is because he was in the hospital with pneumonia one week and the second week

I wouldn't let him go. I had him over home and I didn't feel that he should be getting out of the house yet. So he was a regular attendant of Mass until then. He was just as faithful as he could be. And now he says that he is just too old, and he is afraid to drive down, and he can't walk that far. So he hasn't gone to mass since then. But he is still a devout Catholic. He still believes in his religion and lives by it although he doesn't go to mass.

PN: What kind of traditions did he carry from the old country?

he made wine didn't he?

PR: Yes. He made wine.

PN: What other type of things did they do? For instance did they make sausage?

PR: Well, they use to take care of their own meat, cure their own meat which I am sure your Dad has done. Pork, they would cure their own pork. Oh like they would put up their own olives. Well actually they provided, they were pretty well self-sufficient. If anything ever came up they would can all their own fruit, can their own tomatos, everything. They had, I can remember pigs, chickens. The only thing that they didn't have were beef. They didn't raise their own beer around here. But I can remember as a little boy, he would buy a quarter of beef off and on, but at that time you had no place to store it. So what you brought, you had to but some that could consume. Just keep cold for so long and then you would consume it. I can remember, Mom... they use to always make the homemade spaghetti all the time, noodles, different things like that.



PN: Were you the only boy in the family?

PR: I was the only one that lived. There were six others that died within two weeks to two months after birth. They were all born at seven months I believe.

PN: Do you think that the second generation Italian, this is your generation and mine my generation being second. Do you think that you have lost some of the old traditions that he use to do?

PR: I think that we have lost a lot, but we have still retained a lot. I mean, you and I, if we buy say we buy our pork now, we'll have it cut, and wrapped and froze. They didn't. They would go buy. Well, they use to raise their own pigs; and then they would take it. When they killed it, they would cure it themselves. They took care of all their own meat, which we don't anymore. Wine making, I have been making wine with thim ever since I have been able to walk. Now you can't get the permits here so that is a thing of the past too.

PN: Do you remember any superstitions that he had? Oh concerning making wine and following the moon and things like that?

PR: That's right... they had-the wine had to be made at a certain time-when the moon was full, I believe. And twice a year, once in February and I can't remember; it would be October I think they would have to change their wine. They would have to get down, and they'd take it out of the barrel, wash the barrel out and put it back in. They said if you didn't, all this settling from the barrel would work back up and get into your wine. I can remember

that. The gardens that they use to plant their gardens by the moon. They would go according to how the moon was when they'd plant their gardens.

PN: What else? Did they have anything to do with sickness that you can remember that were part of these superstitions?

PR: I can vaguely, not so much my Dad as my Mother. On this when they'd...you'd call it the evil eye.

PN: Yes.

PR: I think you remember with your mother.

PN: Tell me a little bit about that.

PR: Well they said when ever you get a severe headache you couldn't, aspirin or anything wouldn't help. They would say that somebody had given you the evil eye. In Italian they use to call it the mal occhio, think. I can't remember just how they did it, but there was oil and water in some way and they would make the sign of the cross on your forehead and let the oil drip into the water through some formation that it had, they could tell whether it was that or whether it was just a natural headache which you had. Actually they felt that they could cure a headache by that, if somebody was giving you the evil eye. Through superstition I guess, a lot of them were cured from it. I can't remember too much about it. I can just remember a few times I got a headache, why they would say that, and they would do that. The one that I can remember mostly, remember your mother use too. When I was a little kid about four or five years old she would do it for me when I

would get a headache, and Rose Conti, the two of them. My mother I can never really remember her doing it. I can remember your mother and Rose Conti doing it. Then there was another one and to me tradition is followed on this that bread is considered sacred. There is one thing you didn't do and that is mutilate any bread, at all. To me I was brought up with this and my kids will not do that. That is one thing that I will not put up with.

PN: It is just something that is carried on then.

PR: It is just carried on. I mean if the kids take a slice of bread at the table they will eat it or they will leave it. They will not take it and crumble it up and throw it down. That is the quickest way to make Dad fly off the handle there is.

PN: Is that true Tim?

RR: I don't know; I don't eat bread.

PR: That is about all the superstitions that I can remember that they had, customs.

PN: Has he ever gone back to Italy since he came back the second time?

PR: No, he hasn't. He has talked about it a lot. He has I think three sisters that are still alive back there, but he has never gone back.

PN: Did he help bring anybody over here that you remember?

PR: No, I don't think he did. He, when mom was sick he tried to get one of his sisters whose husband had died to come over as a care taker, you know to help take care of Mom and it fell through for some reason. I don't know why. It was shortly after World War II. There was quite a bit of effort put into it and then

dropped. I never did find out the actual details on it.

PN: Well I think that is about all that we have to do. Thanks a lot.

There is another question that I would like to ask. Was your father in World War II?

PR: No, he was in Italy at the time and the story that I got from him. He was called back in the service, he had been discharged previously and he was called back in. When they called him they had so many men that they gave him a ten day furlow, and that is how long it took him to get his passport and come over here. I think that is one of the reasons that he was never too anxious to go back. Previous to that, I think that he served two years in the army in Italy. That would be similar to the Marine Corp over here. During the Italian-Turkish War, and at that time he got a medical discharge due to-he got pneumonia. The story that I heard him tell, they didn't think that he was going to live and when he came out of it, why they discharged him. This would be after the time that he came here and then went back. He went in the service; and served his time in the service and was discharged; and World War I broke out again, he was called back and that is when he decided he was better over here than in the war over there. So he came over here.

PN: I see. Thanks Paul.